

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

By

V. S. MANIAM

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Franklin D. Roosevelt at the age of 11 was an accomplished horseman

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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PROLOGUE

In August 1942, the climax was reached in India's struggle for independence against British imperialism. During the preceding months, Mahatma Gandhi and other Indian leaders had done their best to soften the British attitude but had failed. At that critical moment, a world leader took up India's cause and pleaded for immediate independence for the people of India. This was Franklin D. Roosevelt, the President of the United States of America.

President Roosevelt was perhaps the only man in the world whom Churchill could not refuse to listen to. And knowing the sensitiveness of Churchill on the question of Indian independence, President Roosevelt had to use all his persuasive powers in pleading the cause of the Indian people.

"The United States had shown an increasingly direct interest in Indian affairs as the Japanese advance into Asia spread westwards," says Churchill in his War Memoirs. "The President had first discussed the Indian problem with me, on the usual American lines, during my visit to Washington in December, 1941. I reacted so strongly and at such length that he never raised it verbally again."

But in February, 1942, President Roosevelt instructed Averell Harriman to sound Churchill on the possibilities of a settlement between the British Government and the Indian leaders.

In reply, Churchill sent to President Roosevelt the statements of Muslim League leaders demanding the partition of India. On March 11, 1942 the President wrote in a private letter :

President Roosevelt to Former Naval Person
(Churchill). 11th March, 1942.

I have given much thought to the problem of India, and I am grateful that you have kept me in touch with it. As you can well realise, I have felt much diffidence in making any suggestions, and it is a subject which of course all of you good people know far more about than I do. I have tried to approach the problem from the point of view of history and with a hope that the injection of a new thought to be used in India might be of assistance to you. That is why I go back to the inception of the Government of the United States. During the Revolution, from 1775 to 1783, the British Colonies set themselves up as thirteen States, each one under a different form of government, although each one assumed individual sovereignty. While the war lasted there was great confusion between these separate sovereignties, and the only two connecting links were the Continental Congress (a body of ill-defined powers and large inefficiencies), and second the Continental Army, which was rather badly maintained by the thirteen States. In 1783, at the end of the war, it was clear that the new responsibilities of the thirteen sovereignties could not be welded into a Federal Union because the experiment was still in the making and any effort to arrive at a final framework would have come to naught. Therefore, the thirteen sovereignties

joined in the Articles of Confederation, an obvious stopgap Government, to remain in effect only until such time as experience and trial and error could bring about a permanent union. The thirteen sovereignties, from 1783 to 1789, proved, through lack of federal power, that they would soon fly apart into separate nations. In 1787 a Constitutional Convention was held with only twenty to twenty-five or thirty active participants, representing all of the States. They met, not as a Parliament, but as a small group of sincere patriots, with the sole objective of establishing a Federal Government. The discussion was recorded, but the meetings were not held before an audience. The present Constitution of the United States resulted, and soon received the assent of two-thirds of the States.

It is merely a thought of mine to suggest the setting up of what might be called a temporary Government in India, headed by a small representative group, covering different castes, occupations, religions, and geographies—this group to be recognised as a temporary Dominion Government. It would of course represent existing Governments of the British provinces, and would also represent the Council of Princes, but my principal thought is that it would be charged with setting up a body to consider a more permanent Government for the whole country—this consideration to be extended over a period of five or six years, or at least until a year after the end of the war. I suppose that this central temporary governing group, speaking for the new Dominion, would have certain executive and administrative powers over

public services, such as finances, railways, telegraphs, and other things which we call public services.

Perhaps the analogy of some such method to the travails and problems of the United States from 1783 to 1789 might give a new slant in India itself, and it might cause the people there to forget hard feelings, to become more loyal to the British Empire, and to stress the danger of Japanese domination, together with the advantage of peaceful evolution as against chaotic revolution.

Such a move is strictly in line with the world changes of the past half-century and with the democratic processes of all who are fighting Nazism. I hope that whatever you do the move will be made from London and that there should be no criticism in India that it is being made grudgingly or by compulsion....

Three days before this letter was sent, the Japanese Army had entered Rangoon. The President thus put the Indian problem in the war context and pleaded for immediate freedom to India.

The result was that Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to New Delhi to negotiate with Indian leaders on the proposals of the Churchill cabinet. Throughout the negotiations, President Roosevelt kept himself in close touch. He was very much disappointed when the talks were abruptly ended. "The President was dismayed," writes Churchill in his War Memoirs, "and urged me to postpone the departure of Cripps in the hope that a final effort could be made."

President Roosevelt's private message to Churchill at the moment shows how earnestly he was endeavouring to obtain Indian independence. This letter, given below,

is dated April 12, 1942, and was sent to the President's Personal Assistant in London, Harry Hopkins :

Kindly give the following message immediately to the Former Naval Person (Churchill). Every effort must be made by us to prevent a breakdown.

I hope most earnestly that you may be able to postpone the departure from India of Cripps until one more effort has finally been made to prevent a breakdown of the negotiations.

I regret to say that I am unable to agree with the point of view contained in your message to me, that public opinion in the United States believes that negotiations have broken down on general broad issues. Here the general impression is quite the contrary. The feeling is held almost universally that the deadlock has been due to the British Government's unwillingness to concede the right of self-government to the Indians notwithstanding the willingness of the Indians to entrust to the competent British authorities technical military and naval defence control. It is impossible for American public opinion to understand why if there is willingness on the part of the British Government to permit the component parts of India to secede after the war from the British Empire it is unwilling to permit them to enjoy during the war what is tantamount to self-government.

I feel that I am compelled to place before you this issue very frankly, and I know you will understand my reasons for doing this. Should the current negotiations be allowed to collapse because of the issues as presented to the people of America, and should India subsequently

be invaded successfully by Japan, with attendant serious defeats of a military or naval character for our side, it would be hard to over-estimate the prejudicial reaction on American public opinion. Would it not be possible, therefore, for you to have Cripps' departure postponed on the ground that you personally transmitted instructions to him to make a final effort to find a common ground of understanding? According to my reading, an agreement appeared very near last Thursday night. If you could authorise him to say that he was personally empowered by you to resume negotiations as at that point, with the understanding that both sides would make minor concessions, it appears to me that an agreement might yet be found.

As I expressed to you in an earlier message, I still feel that if the component groups in India could be given now the opportunity to set up a Nationalist Government in essence similar to our own form of government under the Articles of Confederation, with the understanding that following the termination of a period of trial and error they would be enabled then to determine upon their own form of constitution and to determine, as you have promised them already, their future relationship with the British Empire, probably a solution could be found. If you were to make such an effort and if Cripps were still unable then to find an agreement, at least you would on that issue have public opinion in the United States satisfied that the British Government had made a fair and real offer to the Indian people, and that the responsibility for such failure must be placed

clearly, not upon the British Government, but upon the Indian people.

Churchill was now happy to tell President Roosevelt that Sir Stafford Cripps had already left Delhi for London. What happened to Indo-British relations after the breakdown of these talks is a long and painful story not to be told here. President Roosevelt's solicitude for the fulfilment of Indian aspirations had, however, made an abiding impact and is one of the reasons why he and the United States enjoy the affection and high esteem of an average Indian.

The esteem which Franklin Delano Roosevelt enjoys springs also from other causes : his spurning of affluence and comfort for the sake of public service ; the quiet heroism with which he fought and mastered a terrible physical handicap that would have prostrated, even destroyed, any other man ; the speed and determination with which he met and solved, to a great extent, the complex national problems he encountered as President ; and the skill with which he steered his nation from its self-chosen isolation in international affairs to an active leadership of the democratic world.

Franklin Roosevelt was a great and good man, like many of our own leaders—a man of extraordinary human compassion and with a shrewdness and political skill that could translate that compassion into tangible practical terms. And he was a man of great courage and optimism.

Roosevelt's work in the economic field, especially in the amelioration of the distress that followed in the wake of the great depression of 1929, has undoubtedly been of

special value to this country. And the policies that made up Roosevelt's New Deal do still have practical validity for developing nations.

FDR's story, at least in its broad outlines, is already familiar to most Indians. Here, in the following pages, is an attempt at telling that story in some detail, but simply and unpretentiously.

CHAPTER I

GROTON AND HARVARD

In the spring of 1880 James Roosevelt met his sixth cousin Sara Delano at the New York home of another cousin of his ; and promptly proposed to her. It was an odd proposal. Sara was a noted beauty with a bevy of youthful admirers competing for her attention and for her hand in marriage. And she was not quite half his age. She was 25. James was 52. Also, he was a widower ; and with a son almost as old as Sara. Yet she was deeply attracted by her elderly cousin's courtliness of manner and responded to his attentions with warmth. Sara's father, Warren Delano, did not approve of the match at first. He had great regard for James who had been his business associate for some six years. But he refused to consider him as a suitor for the hand of his daughter. In the face of Sara's stubbornness, however, he had to yield and finally give his consent. The marriage was celebrated in October. Over a year later, on January 30, 1882, Sara bore her husband a plump and pink son. A delighted James wrote in his diary : "About a quarter to nine, my Sallie had a splendid large baby boy. He weighs ten pounds without clothes." In March, 1882, the child was christened Franklin Delano Roosevelt, after Sara's father's brother.

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James Roosevelt was a typical country gentleman, with a comfortable income that enabled him to maintain a dignified and pleasant way of life and a benevolent

interest in the local community activities. At the time of Franklin's birth, James was more or less settled in his sprawling 500-acre Hyde Park Estate on the river Hudson, not very far from New York, with his back turned finally on what had been a fairly hectic business career. If his earlier business speculations had paid off, he might have been even more wealthy than he was and might well have ranked with the Vanderbilts of his day.

James was a direct descendant of one of the earliest Dutch settlers, Claes Martenzen van Rosenvelt, who had arrived at New Amsterdam in the seventeenth century. James's forbears had been, almost without exception, prosperous businessmen, who took the responsibilities of their wealth seriously. "They never felt that because they were born in good position, they could put their hands in their pockets and succeed", said Franklin Roosevelt some years later; "they felt rather that there was no excuse for them if they did not do their duty by the community". And they were all good citizens and believers in God. From his father's line thus, Franklin inherited a strong self-assurance and a healthy sense of responsibility as well as a silent but deep sense of faith. He also inherited a certain gambling instinct and a capacity for taking calculated risks.

From his mother, likewise, Franklin acquired a stubbornness and a refusal to budge from his course once he was sure in his mind of its rightness. Another famous Dutch family originating from the early settlers in New Amsterdam, like the Roosevelts, the Delanos too had been, for many generations, successful businessmen and philanthropists. Sara's father, Warren Delano, had made a tidy

sum in trade with China even as a young man ; then retired to look after his large family in the manner of a kind but firm patriarch. His strongmindedness was duly inherited by Sara, who had married James in opposition to her father's wishes and she passed on this trait to her only son, Franklin.

Hardly anyone among Franklin's ancestors—either on his father's side or on his mother's—had been in active politics. Their chief interests were primarily their family and their estate or business, in that order. Such interest as they took in politics was but distant and casual.

Franklin grew up under the fond care of his mother. James Roosevelt, old and not too well, was content to leave the boy entirely in Sara's hands. Franklin's early schooling was not different from that of any other of his class. Taught at home by his mother at first and by private governesses later, he learnt besides the three R's in English, foreign languages like French and German. In French, he indeed acquired a considerable mastery.

The governess who coached him in French, Mlle Jeanne Sandoz, not only taught the language successfully, she also instilled in him a sense of social consciousness. She was a woman with an active mind and strong sympathies with her fellow-beings. In an essay on Egypt, Franklin wrote at that time : "the working people had nothing....the Kings made them work so hard and gave them so little... they nearly starved... ; they hardly had any clothes so they died in quadrillions."

Franklin was a good pupil and learnt fast. And he impressed all who saw him as a precocious boy. But he grew up also as a shy and serious boy with a strong self-

consciousness. For he spent his time almost entirely in the company of adults.

GROTON

In 1896, when he had reached the age of 14, Franklin was sent to the Public School at nearby Groton. The school had been started a few years earlier by a young clergyman, Endicott Peabody. Dr. Peabody's ambition was to shape Groton into the American counterpart of Dr. Thomas Arnold's famous Rugby School in England : a school that would develop in its pupils moral and physical vigour and a sense of religious and civic responsibility. The ideal which Rector Peabody held up before his pupils as above all else was that of service : service to the Church, to one's fellowmen and to the country.

The boys at Groton, who came from some of the well-known families, had to live in small cubicles furnished austere with but a bed, an almirah, a chair and a small rug, and hooks on the walls for clothes. They had to take cold showers before breakfast. Regulations regarding dress were stern : they had, for instance, to wear stiff collars and patent leather dress shoes for supper. The food itself was not particularly delicious. The shift from the pleasant pattern of life at his house at Hyde Park to the stern austerity of Groton was thus hard upon young Franklin. But he adjusted himself to it without much difficulty.

"I am getting on very well so far" he wrote his parents, soon after joining. "I have not had any black mark or latenesses yet, and I am much better in my studies." But among the group in which Franklin found himself, absence

of black marks, in respect of conduct or punctuality, was a sure indication of lack of school-spirit and the boy had to try hard to get one or two black marks so as not to be out of step with the rest ! He reported a year later to his parents : "I have served off my first black mark today, and I am very glad I got it, as I was thought to have no school-spirit before". He got the black mark "for talking in the school room" !

The school curriculum was weighed down with languages, classical and modern—Latin and Greek and French, German and English—and religious studies. It provided for little more than a nodding acquaintance with natural and social sciences. In Rector Peabody's scale of values, knowledge came after religion, character and athletics.

Franklin did well in his studies, but he was far from brilliant. Perhaps he avoided scholastic brilliance, because it might have meant alienating himself from his class-mates. Primarily, he paid attention to the task of getting on with his fellows. He had entered Groton with an uncomfortable shyness and a sense of inadequacy among boys of his age. Also, he had joined school somewhat late ; and he had what was considered a foreign accent resulting from his early training in European languages. On top of it all was his mother's fond attachment for him, which, however loving and well-meant, was oppressive to the growing boy and a curb on his independence. At Groton, Franklin got over these difficulties. Indeed, in his final year, he rose to be a full-fledged dormitory prefect ; and a good one. He took increasing part in school debates as well, and with some distinction.

The Rector's emphasis on athletics being what it was, Franklin also tried hard to attain some sort of eminence in it. The only field where he could do so was the 'high kick', an odd game in which he jumped up to catch a pan suspended from the ceiling of the gymnasium as it was gradually raised. Franklin scored a record—seven feet and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches—but at considerable physical pain. He fell down heavily on his side every time he jumped up and badly bruised his shoulder.

At Groton, Franklin also developed a sense of concern for the underprivileged. One of Franklin's masters, Sherrard Billings, affectionately known as Mr. B, was a kindly Episcopalian clergyman who frequently undertook preaching and charitable expeditions to the surrounding areas. Franklin was often to be found with Mr. B on these expeditions. Mr. Billing's quiet humanitarianism apparently made a far greater impression on young Franklin's mind than the ostentatious sermons on charity by Dr. Peabody. Under Mr. B, the boy learned to care for his fellowmen.

The lack of an outstanding scholastic record was more than made up for by Franklin's achievement in other spheres. Years later, Franklin was remembered by one who had been junior to him as a "grey-eyed", and "intelligent" boy, with "the warmest, most kindly and outstanding smile." The memory of one of his own classmates was different; he said young Franklin had "developed an independent, cocky manner, and at times became very argumentative and sarcastic in argument. In an argument he always liked to take the side opposite to that maintained by those with whom he was talking".

much to the irritation of other boys. Dr. Peabody's own opinion of young Franklin, inscribed in the boy's final grade report, was that he had been "a thoroughly faithful scholar and a most satisfactory member of the school throughout his course". Long years later he was to say : "We all liked him."

AT HARVARD

At Harvard, which Franklin joined in September, 1900, life was much the same as it had been at Groton. Only, the monastic austerity of life at Groton was now replaced by a great measure of comfort : he was, among other things, free to live in his own rooms. Studies had taken a second place after athletics at Groton ; at Harvard they went even lower down. There were the usual club activities; and there was the college newspaper with which young Franklin became soon engrossed. Also, there was the social whirl of Boston, just across the river, which he had to cope with. With his handsome personality and debonair ways, Franklin was indeed much in demand at Boston parties. And he did some justice to that kind of life. Social acceptance, it has been said, was of crucial importance to the young Roosevelt ; therefore, his prominent interest in Boston's high society. What Franklin was doing, however, was to further the process of getting out of his shell, which he had begun at Groton.

At Harvard, again, Franklin tried hard to distinguish himself in some major sport. But he was too much light in weight to make good in any of them. To make up for this failure, he turned his attention increasingly to the Harvard paper *Crimson*. In the early stages, he worked almost six hours a day on it. A happy accident which

helped him get a 'scoop' for the paper about a surprise lecture by Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt led to his soon being appointed one of the *Crimson's* five editors. Before the year was out, Franklin had become its Editor-in-Chief.

His editorship of the *Crimson* was in many ways a great success, and the most significant aspect of his life at Harvard. Franklin's editorials in the *Crimson* were, for the most part, concerned with purely college problems like failure at sports, poor spirit in the team, and lack of enthusiasm of spectators ; and occasionally, with questions like inadequacy of fire protection on the campus, and the need for board walks. But he was at the same time utilising the editorial space also for drawing attention to happenings in the outside world like the mistreatment of the vanquished in the Boer War. Roosevelt even established a Boer relief fund. His mental horizons widened ; and his sympathies grew significantly.

Even more significant, Roosevelt learned, while on the *Crimson*, the art of coaxing people to do his bidding. He could, for instance, cajole the dour Scotsman who printed the *Crimson* into altering his pages even at the last moment. And in the handling of his staff he acquired, in the words of one of his co-editors, a geniality that was "a kind of frictionless command." The early talent for personal leadership would develop further as he grew in years.

Roosevelt's enthusiasm for the *Crimson* was so great that he stayed a fourth year at Harvard merely to edit it even though he had completed the requirements for a bachelor's degree in the third year itself.

His efforts to attain prominence in college club activities did not meet with the same success. True, he had become secretary of one of the clubs, the Freshmen Glee Club. But he failed to secure election to the most elite of them all, the Porcellian. This failure, as some have said, gave him a certain inferiority complex. But yet others have suggested that Franklin could not have taken it so seriously : he "had more on his mind than sitting in the club's front window, doing nothing and criticizing the passers-by", said one. The failure, at any rate, developed in him a trace of humility and enabled him also to associate more widely with people considered socially his inferiors.

Of his main scholastic programme at Harvard, Roosevelt said later that it was like "an electric lamp that had not got any wire. You need the lamp for the light, but it is useless unless it is switched on." He took on a number of courses in history and the social sciences and government and economics—European History, Constitutional Government, International Law, Currency Legislation, American Government, American Legislation, Economics of Transportation, of Banking and of Corporation ; indeed the whole gamut of them. But the courses had hardly any practical value. This was, however, a later realization. In the college itself, Roosevelt was duly serious about the courses and put in a considerable amount of study. He secured, though, only the academic average of "C". No mean achievement, considering that his social life and extra-curricular activities left him very little time or energy for studies.

If Roosevelt's four years at Harvard held any indi-

cation as to his future, it was perhaps to be found in his insistent campaigning for various college matters, chiefly through the *Crimson*. He was taking a deep pleasure in it all ; and the attainment of final success gave him no little satisfaction. It has been remarked that if at Groton Roosevelt had learnt to get along with his contemporaries, at Harvard he learned to lead them. He took at Harvard thus the first steps towards becoming an effective politician.

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When Roosevelt left Harvard there had taken place great changes in his personal life. James Roosevelt had died within months of Franklin's joining college. A year later, Sara had moved from Hyde Park to an apartment in Boston so as to be near her son.

Franklin, though, would not allow her to dominate his life any longer or have his newly found independence taken away. An example of this was his firm handling of the question of his marriage.

CHAPTER II

ELEANOR

Towards the end of 1903, while yet at Harvard, young Franklin made an announcement to his mother Sara which she described as 'startling' while writing in her diary that night. The 'startling' announcement was none other than that he had proposed to his fifth cousin, Eleanor Roosevelt, and had been accepted by her. Franklin was hardly 22 years old at the time, Eleanor only 19.

Eleanor was the daughter of Eliot Roosevelt—the illustrious Theodore Roosevelt's younger brother—and Anna Hall, a noted beauty of the time. The girl, however, inherited little of her mother's beauty, and was relatively gawky. She was afflicted by a deep sense of inadequacy which the attitude of her own mother and the environment of her childhood did little to reduce. Her mother kept calling the girl 'granny' because of her seriousness of manner and kept her perpetually conscious of what she considered her lack of good looks. Eliot Roosevelt was, on the contrary, a warm-hearted and genial man who understood the shy, lonely and serious girl. But he was badly addicted to drinking; and was often ill; and away from the family most of the time. And he was dead before Eleanor was ten. Anna passed away not long afterwards.

Eleanor was then brought up by her grandmother, a stern woman who understood the little girl even less than the rest had done. Under her, the girl's inner feelings of inadequacy and diffidence only increased. She

withdrew more and more into herself. At the age of fifteen, she managed to escape from this continuous chain of misery, as a result of her grandmother's decision to send her to England to study with a French woman, Mlle. Souvestre.

Her stay in England was the only happy spell in Eleanor's early years. Mlle. Souvestre, a warm person herself, instilled a new sense of confidence and independence in the young girl. The once solemn girl now turned even gay. But such confidence and gaiety were shortlived. When, after three years, she returned to the Hall home, her uncles and aunt rapidly undid what good her trip to England had done. The aunt was a woman repeatedly frustrated in her love affairs, and the uncles were both habitual drinkers. And the whole family lived far above its means, with a brooding sense of insecurity overhanging the household. This did not fail to affect Eleanor, although she kept rebelling against it all. Fortunately she was able to escape this unhappy situation after some time when she went to live with her cousins in New York, who were kind and stable, unlike her uncles and aunt. Her stay at New York with her cousins had, like her stay with Mlle. Souvestre, a considerable effect on her. The liberal attitudes and beliefs she had been imbued with while in England found practical expression in New York. She actively took up a number of services for the under-privileged in the city. In her spare time among other things, she taught at a settlement house in the slum areas of New York. She also assisted in the investigation of the living conditions of a section of working class people.

In the process, Eleanor blossomed into a mature personality with very little of her early shyness and with much greater confidence in herself than ever before. Her innate kindness and consideration for others now developed into a keen desire to help her fellow beings.

With growing self-confidence, Eleanor found occasion for other interests as well. Around this time, she came into frequent and close contact with her fifth cousin, Franklin, who was at Harvard. Her father Eliot had been Franklin's godfather and she had met Franklin many times before during the previous years. But she saw him now with a warm and increasing attachment.

Franklin, even as a little boy, had developed an affection for the shy Eleanor. He had given her piggy-back rides when she was a little girl. Later, as a school boy at Groton and of an age when boys start thinking of dance partners, Franklin's natural preference was Eleanor for his partner. At Harvard this vague childhood and boyhood affection matured into an abiding attachment. While most others considered her gawky and awkward, he found in her a certain willowy charm; and her animation attracted him. He found her, besides, extremely sensible. "Eleanor is one girl you can really talk to", he told his mother once, not without some boldness, "most of the girls I know haven't a grain of sense". Her close relationship with Theodore Roosevelt, young Franklin's ideal almost since he could remember, was also probably a factor in his wooing her. Franklin had always been proud of his own relationship with 'Uncle Ted', however distant it was, and had shouted himself hoarse applauding the elder cousin's successive

political victories. Eleanor happened to be closely related to Theodore. This, for Franklin, was another happy circumstance in her favour.

In Franklin's first months at Harvard Eleanor was often to be seen with him at parties at Boston as well as at Hyde Park. In 1903 when Eleanor was visiting her brother, Hall Roosevelt, at Groton, Franklin dashed there and impetuously proposed to her. Eleanor had always been deeply attracted by her cousin, particularly by his exuberance and by his overwhelming self-confidence. The happy security of the Hyde Park home, a security which her own childhood and adolescence had missed, also had an influence on her. She promptly accepted his proposal.

Sara Roosevelt did not approve of the match immediately. With her husband dead, she had counted on Franklin's being with her at Hyde Park, if only for a few more years. She tried to persuade him to change his mind saying he was not yet of an age to consider marriage. His own father, she told him, had married not until he was 33 ; not until he was "a man who had made a name and place for himself, who had something to offer a woman". Franklin was deaf to these appeals. His mind was already made up. Sara then tried the classic device of sending him out on a long cruise. But he returned from the cruise with his ardour for Eleanor unchanged. In a final frantic effort Sara even took him away to Washington to find him a job that would take him out of America for some time. Ironically, while she went visiting prominent officials, Franklin visited Eleanor who also happened to be in Washington. Mrs. Roosevelt

finally gave in, with some semblance of grace. She had, she now said, never had any objection to Eleanor herself; her objection had been only to the comparative earliness of the marriage.

The engagement was announced in late 1904, when Roosevelt had already left Harvard and entered law school. The marriage took place shortly afterwards amidst much publicity at New York, with President Theodore Roosevelt himself giving his niece away. It was not without its ironic movements, as when, the ceremony over, the entire crowd clustered around the illustrious President, leaving the bride and bridegroom severely alone. This prompted a wag to remark that at the marriages which Theodore Roosevelt attended, he was the bridegroom; at the funerals he was the corpse!

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Franklin's marriage to Eleanor was a turning point in his career; he was clearly the richer for it. With her constant self-questioning, she toned down his exuberance; her innate kindness and concern for the under-privileged enlarged his social consciousness; and she shaped his vague sympathies into a solid concern for others and an eagerness to serve them. In later years when he was stricken by paralysis she was truly a tower of strength behind him.

Eleanor was the kind of person Franklin would have married, in any case. One of his Harvard contemporaries has said that Franklin had always had her in the back of his mind as an ideal. As later events were to prove, Franklin could not have made a happier choice.

CHAPTER III

ALBANY AND WASHINGTON

Franklin's career through the Columbia Law Institute in New York, which he joined towards the end of 1904 on leaving Harvard, followed the same pattern as before. At no time did he strive for academic distinction. All that he seemed bent upon was acquiring legal knowledge. His grades, as before, did not rise above the general average of "C". And he failed in two of his courses.

Franklin gave up his courses altogether the moment he passed the examination for entrance to the New York Bar. He joined the distinguished law firm of Carter, Ledyard and Milburn on Wall Street, as an assistant lawyer. The firm was at the time specializing in the defence of big trusts like the Standard Oil Company against the growing anti-trust policies of the government of the day. This was something of an irony, for Franklin himself was to be a fighter of trusts in later years.

The young lawyer had, however, no part in the bigger legal battles that were being fought by his law firm. At any rate, he was never greatly interested in these higher legal matters. His time was taken up with more lowly and routine municipal cases. This was lucky for him. For, this work brought him in close touch with a great variety of ordinary people and endowed him with some insight into the ways of the common man. This would be a great asset later. Even more lucky for him was the fact that his work brought him in contact also

with the politicians of the district. For it was thus that Roosevelt's first political chance came his way.

One morning, some three years after he had joined the law firm, a Democratic leader of Poughkeepsie, who was also the District Attorney of the county, stepped into Roosevelt's room for some minor consultations. His business over, he casually asked if the young lawyer would be interested in running for the New York State Assembly : a seat was likely to fall vacant shortly ; would he care to contest it ? The young man jumped at the idea.

It is interesting to imagine what might have happened if the Poughkeepsie politician had not casually sounded young Franklin on running for the State Assembly seat. Would he have ever entered the political arena if this chance had not come his way ? It seems reasonable to presume that, in any event, Franklin would have entered politics. He had long ago charted out his future course in his mind. Early in his legal career, he had told his colleagues in the Law office that he was not going to practise Law forever. He planned to run for political office at the first opportunity. "He wanted to be, and thought he had a very real chance to be President," one of his fellow lawyers Grenville Clark, recalled writing in 1945 in the Harvard Alumni Bulletin. Roosevelt, according to Clark, even described accurately the steps by which he thought he could reach his goal : first, a seat in the State Assembly, then an appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and finally the Governorship of New York. Anyone who is Governor of New York has a good chance to be President

with any luck, Franklin told his colleagues. The latter thought his ambition proper and sincere and entirely reasonable. His aristocratic background, his education under the ambitious Peabody and, to some extent, his connection with Theodore Roosevelt with his own keen desire to emulate Uncle Teddy's example, had already prepared him for that course. Even if this particular chance had not come his way Franklin would surely have seized some other to realize his ambition.

What attracted the Democratic politicians of the State towards the young law clerk was primarily the Roosevelt name and, of course, the money behind him. The party could use the money. Money then, as now, was not exactly a disadvantage for aspirants to political office.

As it turned out, however, the expected vacancy in the Assembly did not materialize. The incumbent, Lewis S. Chanler, was far from eager to give it up. The Poughkeepsie Democrats then suggested that Roosevelt could instead run for State Senator from the same district. This was a formidable task, for the constituency was traditionally Republican and the holder liked by the electorate. But Roosevelt did not hesitate. He had made up his mind to enter politics and he would do so whether it was to contest for a seat in the Assembly or for one in Senate.

Once the decision was made, minor difficulties, like his lack of party standing, were quickly cleared and the stage was set for the contest. It was a whirlwind contest and, in many ways, the forerunner of the powerful and well-planned campaigns Roosevelt would wage

years afterwards. With characteristic forethought, Roosevelt first chose the issue on which he would fight the election. He chose the question of "bossism". For some time previously, this had been a live issue within the Republican Party. Men like Theodore Roosevelt had been expressing themselves strongly against control of their party by the elderly conservatives. This was thus the most vulnerable spot in the Republican armour and Roosevelt decided, wisely, to pierce through it to electoral victory. Even more wise was Roosevelt's decision to avoid partisan issues and make his electoral platform bipartisan so as to make himself acceptable to Democrats and Republicans alike within the electorate.

Once the broad strategy was settled, Roosevelt tackled the brass-tacks problems of reaching the electorate. After all, he was little more than a member of an illustrious clan so far as the voter was concerned. In his own home town, he had not developed the political contacts or gathered the popularity that were essential for any rising politician. Roosevelt hired a car, the only one available in the district, and toured the entire area, some 25,000 square miles of it. Within a few days he had captured the hearts of a great majority of the electorate with his ready smile and his total lack of formality. When he started his campaign, he was by no means an orator ; he was new to the game of political campaigning itself. But with his native talent, he overcame his handicaps as he progressed with the campaign ; by its end, he had become a skilful campaigner.

When the results were announced, it was found that

Roosevelt had secured 15,708 votes to his opponent's 14,568 : a considerable victory for a newcomer. More important, he had secured a greater number of votes than the rest of the Democratic candidates who had stood for election in the area.

Roosevelt was hardly 29 when he moved to Albany to take his place in the State Senate.

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Perhaps the most significant event in the early days of Roosevelt's stay in Albany was his head-on clash with the bosses of Tammany Hall, the New York Headquarters of the Democratic Party. The clash occurred even before the young Senator had settled down to his work.

The matter over which Roosevelt clashed with Tammany was the question of selection from New York of a Senator for the Upper House in Washington. The election was not a direct one ; the Senator was elected by members of both State Assembly and Senate meeting in a joint session. The election itself was no more than a formal affair, since whoever was nominated by the majority party easily got elected. The organizational leaders of the Democratic Party, which was in a clear majority in the State Congress, had already settled upon a man called William F. Sheehan. The candidate did have qualities to recommend him, but in the eyes of Roosevelt, fresh from his striking electoral successes and fresh to politics itself, Sheehan was not exactly the best man available for the Senate seat. He challenged the party's selection. And suggested what he considered to be a better candidate, a man called Edward M. Sheppard. Roosevelt's nominee was a noted civic leader, but he was

a little too independent to be in favour with Tammany. The party leaders put their foot down, in the easy assumption that the opposition to their own nominee could be crushed in no time.

They had counted without the stubbornness of Roosevelt. He quickly brought together all those within the party who were like him righteous-minded and opposed to the bosses' stranglehold over the party. An ordered and vigorous campaign was set afoot against the nominee of the organization as against the broader issue of bossism itself. Charles Murphy, the tough leader of Tammany soon found he could not have Sheehan elected. But he refused to negotiate on the issue.

The struggle continued hard and long, with both sides unyielding. Clearly, the leaders of Tammany were the stronger side. Roosevelt was as yet a novice in the political field. He lacked, among other things, the guile which the old-time party leaders had in abundance. For Murphy wore the insurgents down through sheer dilatory tactics. Abruptly at one stage, he put up a compromise candidate, a man certainly better than Sheehan. Tired by now with their seemingly unending and futile struggle the insurgents agreed. Hardly had they done so, the name was withdrawn—under the pretext that he was not willing to enter the lists. Another name was quickly suggested, doubtless a man with some independence, but one prominently connected with Tammany. The insurgents found themselves tricked into a position where they had no alternative except to support Murphy's candidate. Roosevelt and a few others, though, remained firm in their refusal to yield. The rest walked back shamefacedly to

the party meeting to vote for Murphy's man. The gallant struggle had whimpered out into the expected defeat for the Roosevelt forces.

Yet Roosevelt had won a notable victory. For one thing, he had made the party bosses realize that they could no longer browbeat the rest into unquestioning obedience as they once used to ; that they must show due respect for the view of the minority in the party as well. Tammany's iron rule over the New York Democrats had been cracked. For the first time in some two decades of its rule, it had encountered one who could stand up to it and refuse to be intimidated by its apparent power. Even more important for Roosevelt personally was the favourable national publicity he had secured in the course of the long struggle. Bossism, as we have seen, was a national issue at the time. That a young new-comer to politics had the nerve to put up a spirited fight against the party machine naturally hit the headlines in newspapers all over the country. In the eyes of the masses of people the young Roosevelt took on the hues of a modern knight out to fight wickedness and nepotism.

Roosevelt learned a few valuable lessons too. Most important of all was the realization that in politics, as in life itself, no issue could be treated as a clear-cut one between righteousness and wickedness ; that compromises on issues that were not basic had of necessity to be made, if one was to work for and secure the maximum good. On the personal plane, he learned that political success was won not through unyielding fights like the one he had waged, but through crafty negotiations.

His struggle with the political bosses was, however,

to continue intermittently for quite some time. Shortly after the controversy over Sheehan, he brought forward a resolution suggesting to the State Congress direct election of United States Senators and, again ran into trouble with Tammany. He tried out a variety of strategies to have the resolution put through Congress, but under Tammany's pressure he had ultimately to vote for a measure much tamer than his own. He was more successful though, in the matter of other legislation, covering mainly agriculture and labour. So successful indeed that he came to be hailed as progressive, although he had not directly put through any legislation.

Presently, his two-year term was over and another election had to be fought and won. With the favourable publicity he had obtained and with the heartening impression he had made on the electorate, Roosevelt had little doubt of his success. Yet characteristically, he refused to take things easy. As before, he organized his campaign in the most thorough manner possible, hitching it to one clear issue : protection of the farmers of his electoral district, who were predominantly apple-growers, from abuses in their dealings with New York city commission merchants. The farmers had been particularly sore over the measurement of their apples in oversize barrels by the buyers ; and were demanding that a standard size barrel be fixed by legislation. Roosevelt took this up for the central issue of his campaign. He assured the apple-growers the standard size barrel they asked for.

Halfway through the campaign, however, Roosevelt took ill and an Albany journalist friend, a lean dedicated man called Louis McHenry Howe, was drafted in to

carry on Roosevelt's campaign. A crafty man with a considerable knowledge of the game of politics and an experienced campaigner, Howe brought to the already able campaign of Roosevelt an extra measure of thoroughness and skill. Howe was to stand by his young chief for some two score years thereafter, and help him win many more election battles through skilful and shrewd campaigning.

Not surprisingly, Roosevelt won his second election with a greater majority than in 1910. In January 1913, he took his seat in the Senate in Albany for his second term.

The young Senator was now entrusted with greater responsibilities than before. Chief of all, he was made Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture. One of the first things Roosevelt did on this Committee was to take steps to redeem his election pledge for a standard size barrel for the apple-growers. He also arranged for effective checks on commission merchants. He initiated well-planned legislation on these, although, as it happened, he did not stay in Albany to see them through.

Roosevelt's legislative work during his years in Albany was, in vital respects, the forerunner of his later policies. On the agricultural front, he worked for regulation of working hours, improvement of working conditions and establishment of better wage levels. On the purely political front, again he displayed the same highmindedness and championed direct primary elections for party nominations as well as direct election of United States Senators, both measures designed to take these matters away from the hands of party bosses.

At Albany, Roosevelt also learned to make fruitful compromises with conservative elements in the party and carry them along in whatever progressive legislative measures he championed either by himself or in association with others. Such compromise, he found, was necessary if he was to be effective at all in anything he did. Albany thus enabled him to gain valuable experience in the art and craft of Parliamentary politics.

Meanwhile, in 1912, there had been yet another resounding clash between the young Senator and Tammany Hall.

For quite some time, Roosevelt had been a keen admirer of the Governor of New Jersey, Woodrow Wilson, perhaps the strongest liberal contender for the Democratic nomination for President. On a visit to the Governor, the young Senator had vouchsafed him his support. But Charles Murphy of Tammany happened to hold a different view in the matter. What lent his view importance was that he controlled the 90-strong party delegation to the convention that would select the Presidential nominee. Roosevelt had, on the other hand, enlisted the support of only a handful in favour of Wilson. But he was not one to be defeated. In New York and then at the convention, he continued to campaign energetically for Wilson, even though Murphy, to the end, refused to throw in his weight behind Governor Wilson. Wilson, however, won on the forty-sixth ballot.

Back in New York after the convention, Roosevelt continued his energetic campaign on Wilson's behalf. He tried to mobilize support for Wilson by setting up a group within the Democratic Party itself, a move aimed pri-

marily at weakening Tammany's hold over the party. But pitted as he was against the political experience and guile of Murphy and his men, Roosevelt had to give up his move within a few months. One reason was that he himself had to secure renomination for State Senator. Peace with Tammany was indicated. And the election had to be won. This, as has been seen, he did with comparative ease. In January, 1913, he entered his second term as New York State Senator.

But he was not to remain in Albany for long.

The young Senator had made a deep impression on Wilson even at their first meeting, months before the Democratic convention. With his active campaigning in Wilson's behalf during the convention as afterwards, despite the virulent opposition of his home delegation to him, Roosevelt had further endeared himself to the old leader. When Wilson won the Presidential election it was virtually certain that Roosevelt would be drafted into the new Federal Cabinet.

Shortly before Wilson's inauguration as President, Roosevelt was called to Washington to be sounded out on the matter. The office of the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury was the first to be offered to him ; but he declined it. The young man had his eye only on one office : that of Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Uncle Theodore had entered Washington in that capacity only ; and now, Franklin would also do that. Five years earlier itself he had told his colleagues in the New York Law office that this was the course he would follow. He got the office without his having to ask for it.

On the morning of the inauguration, Roosevelt hap-

pened to meet Josephus Daniels, the new Secretary of the Navy, at his hotel. Daniels had heard of the young man's exploits against the party bosses in New York; he had also learnt of the young man's practical progressivism. Almost the first thing he asked when he met the young man was if he would consider becoming his assistant. Roosevelt readily accepted, his face beaming with pleasure.

On March 17, 1913, Roosevelt took the oath of office. He was barely 31 : only half the age of many of the admirals with whom he would transact business. Excitedly he wrote to his mother that afternoon : "I am baptized, confirmed, sworn in..."

During the following seven years in Washington as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt took a further step towards mastering the art of getting along with and leading people. His office required him to deal intimately with the proud and touchy labour engaged in the construction jobs of the Navy, the equally proud admirals, and, to a slightly lesser extent, the politicians in Congress on Capitol Hill. His chief, Josephus Daniels, was largely engaged in getting his programmes accepted by the Congress. It was left to the young assistant to put those programmes through. The result was, as Roosevelt described it, he got his fingers into everything.

Roosevelt's handling of organised labour was particularly marked by shrewdness and skill; and by a genuine concern to improve their working conditions and in their general welfare. At every opportunity, he addressed labour about better wages, regulated working hours and about due consultation in all matters concerning them.

And he introduced an extraordinary informality in dealings with them : "I want you all to feel that you can come to me at any time to my office to talk over matters", he told a group of machinists once.

On a different plane, Roosevelt endeared himself to the old-time admirals and military thinkers by his support for their ambitious plans for a Navy larger and more efficient than that the United States had at the time. He did so in the most tactful manner, though, since the nation was, by and large, against anything that smacked of war. But this was not a question of war or peace, he frequently assured the public in his speeches ; the nation had decided in the past itself to have a fleet. Also war was still a possibility ; and they had to be prepared to meet all eventualities. But, notwithstanding these cogent reasons, his support for the idea of a big navy stemmed clearly from his own characteristic passion for bigness.

The office had a political side also in the multitude of appointments that had become Roosevelt's duty to make. Political compulsions demanded that such jobs, at least most of them, should be given to those eligible among partymen and supporters of the party. This was a fact of political life which, however high-minded, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy could not altogether spurn. The shrewd Roosevelt not only did not spurn this fact, he actually distributed jobs to strengthen his hands further politically.

Roosevelt's general approach to the problems he was confronted with in his day-to-day work was supremely pragmatic. He was, as has been said, concerned with

immediate problems, not eternal absolutes. His interest lay mainly in the job on hand and in the best means of carrying it out. Political and other considerations were not ordinarily allowed to sway him, although he was not entirely averse to deriving occasional advantage through skilful management of the political side. The result ; the reputation he had won in Albany as a liberal grew further during his years as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Meanwhile, there had been an unhappy interlude.

In 1913, when he moved to Washington to take up office under President Wilson, many had congratulated him for having escaped the squalid pressures of Tammany. This was a little premature. For Roosevelt was not entirely done with his State's politics. He kept watching with interest the steady breaking up of Tammany's strength and, suddenly, at one stage, he took it into his head to contest the U.S. Senate seat from New York. This decision he took apparently without consulting anyone. It was not a wise decision, and it led to the only political defeat in his career. For in the senatorial primary elections held in September late that year, Roosevelt was roundly defeated by Tammany's candidate.

Roosevelt might have won in the primaries had he not been rash in his condemnation of Tammany leaders and antagonized them in the way he did. But then, he had always taken an uncompromising stand against basic issues like bossism and it would have been out of character for him to have appeased Tammany for the sake of getting the nomination. At any rate, as a result of his defeat, Roosevelt finally learned his lesson that he must accept and live with the entrenched party

organisers. He was not yet an even match for the more experienced man of Tammany. So well did he learn his lesson that less than four years later Tammany was to sound him out for the Democratic nomination for Governor of New York.

The political defeat did not trouble the young man for long. Momentous events were happening abroad, and great responsibilities were being thrust upon him. A war had broken out in Europe in August 1914, and within months Kaiser's Germany had created a frightening submarine menace in the Atlantic. The clamour for a bigger and more efficient navy to tackle the menace gathered strength in the country day by day. In May 1915, the famous passenger ship *Lusitania* was sunk, lending further point to the need for naval preparedness : some 1200 persons were drowned, of whom 124 were American citizens. Yet President Wilson would not take a decision on the question of preparedness for war, contenting himself with strong notes to Germany over the *Lusitania* and still reluctant to be drawn into a conflict. Not until fears grew of Germany and Japan allying themselves against the United States, did the President come to advocate preparedness actively.

As a result, the dimensions of Roosevelt's job increased phenomenally. He was almost solely in charge of naval mobilization and the hammering out of naval plans of action to combat the unrestricted submarine warfare resorted to by Germany in the Atlantic. With the declaration of war on Germany by the United States in April 1917, he had also to work closely with his counterparts among the Allied Governments ; which called

for no mean diplomatic skill. Roosevelt measured up to all these duties and greatly matured in the process. As evidence of his active interest in his work he even undertook a trip to Europe on a destroyer in 1918 so as to see the war at first hand. By this time, however, Germany was a spent force. In November that year, the war came to the expected end, with a crushing defeat for the Germans.

The war had provided Roosevelt a rare opportunity in handling a job of really large dimensions and one calling for a dynamism and an intrepidity that would serve him well in later days. He had gained, besides intimate experience of the functioning of the National administration; and of the often frustrating negotiations that had to be held by members of the Cabinet with the legislators. Because of the vagaries of the political system, these were conservatives, by and large, and seemingly opposed to any progressive decisions. Getting a programme accepted by them was by no means easy and often an exercise in political skill.

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Even as peace returned to Europe another election was around the corner, to some extent stealing the limelight away from European events.

Many things were happening at home. President Wilson had returned from Europe with the aura of a peace-maker, and with ambitious ideas about a League of Nations in which the United States would also participate, and which would make wars impossible. But he had run into sudden trouble with the politicians on Capitol Hill. The Foreign Relations Committee of

the Senate refused altogether to approve of the Peace Treaty of which the League Covenant was a part. The perplexed President toured the country in a vain effort to canvass support for his ideas. But the Treaty was not accepted and with it the Covenant of the League of Nations was rejected. Wilson suffered a total breakdown. The Democratic Party's spirits were at their lowest ebb when it met at San Francisco to nominate its candidate for President.

The nomination was a long-drawn affair. The Democrats looked for a man who would not be too closely identified with President Wilson's League of Nations policy—which had become the subject of acute controversy in the nation—but would yet have his progressive colouring. Such a one was hard to find. After several days of deadlock, the convention finally chose James M. Cox, Governor of Ohio.

Then came a surprise : Roosevelt was selected for Vice-President. He had already built up a reputation as a Wilsonian progressive, a dynamic administrator and a man with immense popular appeal. He was indeed the natural choice for the Vice-Presidential nomination. When his name was put to the convention, it was accepted unanimously. But Roosevelt himself was taken by surprise at the turn of events. Only a few months earlier he had written to a friend : "I do not personally intend to make an early Christian martyr of myself this autumn if it is going to be a strongly Republican year." Yet he accepted the party's call.

With characteristic verve he went ahead to launch a high-powered election campaign in the best Roosevelt

tradition. He made the League of Nations issue his central election plank. He had been appalled by the shabby treatment President Wilson had received at the hands of the Republican Congress. And he was personally convinced that America's joining the League would alone offer that body a hope of permanence as well as of effectiveness. Unfortunately, though, the Democrats themselves were divided on this issue. And as it turned out, it was not exactly wise for Roosevelt to have hitched his election campaign to so controversial a question.

Cox and Roosevelt traversed the entire country with an aggressive campaign. Roosevelt alone made over a thousand speeches, on a wide variety of issues—speeches which, taken together, formed the political, social and economic philosophy of the young man. Roosevelt was not yet 38 at the time, but his maturity of outlook made a deep impression on the electorate.

As Roosevelt himself had suspected, 1920 was indeed a 'strongly Republican year'. The Republicans secured a landslide victory and their nominees, Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge, were elected President and Vice-President. The party also secured absolute control over both Houses of Congress. Roosevelt was by no means dismayed. The election had been another instalment in his political training and a valuable experience. He had conducted a nationwide campaign for the first time and had made a powerful impact on the American people. From a Federal administrator he had turned into a prominent national political figure. The road to the Presidency had opened for young Roosevelt.

Elections over, Roosevelt went back to the practice of law. In addition, he accepted a job as Vice-President of a large surety bonding firm and was placed in charge of its New York office on a salary five times the one he had 'drawn as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. But he hardly ever took his business seriously. His defeat in the national elections was not to his mind the end of his political career. Politics remained his one goal. He had to bide his time until he could make his next attempt at political eminence. Meanwhile, he had to do something to keep himself busy. Business coupled with law seemed as good as any other.

Destiny had apparently different plans for him. On a bright August day, some six months after he had entered business, it struck him a crushing blow.

CHAPTER IV

POLIO

In the forenoon of that fateful day in August on Campobello Island, where he had his summer home, Roosevelt had played a round of golf as usual. Soon after, he was to go out with Eleanor and the youngsters to make arrangements for a trip in his small yacht the next day. But he was feeling listless and out of sorts.

He had been like that ever since he had returned from Washington. He had gone to the capital to testify before a sub-committee of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee that was enquiring into an incident at Newport sometime earlier. Specifically, the sub-committee was examining the improper methods resorted to by an investigating committee while probing a case of immoral practices among naval personnel at the place. The investigating committee had been appointed by Roosevelt. And now he himself was charged with responsibility for the incident. Roosevelt had prepared an effective rebuttal of the charge. But, exploiting the politics of the situation and violating its own promise to him, the Republican majority on the Committee published its report even before Roosevelt could present his side of the case. The report naturally hit the headlines in the newspapers ; and, as published, it was completely unfair to him. Roosevelt was understandably bitter. It was to forget this that he had come to Campobello. His sense of dispiritedness continued, however.

After golf, Roosevelt took out the youngsters on his yacht for a trip round the islands. They sailed all through the morning ; and as they returned, they noticed a forest fire on one of the islands. Roosevelt steered the yacht to the spot and jumped out to fight the fire. By the time it was quenched, he was completely tired. To revive himself, he decided to go for a vigorous swim in the bay before going home. He had had a chill only the previous day, but he forgot it altogether and kept playing in the water for a long time. Before entering home, Roosevelt had one more quick dip in the ocean. Walking in, he picked up his mail and, as was characteristic of him, started reading, not minding his dripping clothes. By the time he had finished reading the letters, he was far more tired than he had been in the morning. Refusing food, he went directly to bed.

The next morning, he woke up to find his legs heavy and muscles curiously numb. It was only with pain that he could move. On top of it, he was running a high fever. His doctor came and diagnosed it as no more than a severe chill. He advised him to stay in bed. But Roosevelt's temperature increased, as did the pain all over the body. The legs got heavier with every passing minute and the muscles hurt even at the slightest movement. The local doctor now was not so sure of his diagnosis. During the three days that had passed since Roosevelt went down with the chill, he had progressively lost control of his legs. And a stage was reached when he could not move them at all ; even his arms now felt heavy. A specialist from a nearby island was duly sent for. He thought it was just a clot of blood resulting

from a congestion in the spinal chord. And prescribed a course of massage for the legs and thighs.

This was wrong ; for, as a result, the leg and thigh muscles, already raw and hypersensitive, were further damaged. The fever itself continued for over a week. Throughout the ordeal Eleanor stayed by her husband's side and nursed him. It was almost a fortnight after he was stricken down that Roosevelt's affliction was diagnosed as an unusual, but mild, case of poliomyelitis or infantile paralysis. He was advised to be in hospital for a proper course of treatment. Some two weeks later, he was moved to the Presbyterian Hospital in New York.

The critical stage of Roosevelt's illness was now over. Throughout, he had shown remarkable self-control and courage, never outwardly showing any signs of the terrible inner despair that he must have felt. Nor did he allow others to be depressed by his illness. His buoyancy of spirit remained unchanged. The powerful religious faith he had inherited from his parents had clearly stood by him and sustained him in those first days.

Roosevelt was in hospital for nearly six weeks. The fever continued intermittently and the sensitivity of his limbs kept growing sharper. He made little progress, at first, but he continued to fight back with courage. By the time he left hospital, he managed to recover almost the entire strength in the muscles of his arms, even though he could not move a single muscle in his legs.

The treatment continued for long afterwards. Roosevelt started using heavy braces of steel on both legs and tried slowly to stand up and walk with crutches. The first efforts were frustrating failures, but he refused to

yield the struggle, and continued with determination. Not until he went to Warm Springs in Georgia, long months later, to try some vigorous swimming in its health-giving waters, was he to gain even partial control of his hip muscles. The potent waters of this health resort, not too well known at the time, revived his strength magically, even if they did not make his legs fully alive.

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What effect did his illness and the consequent acute physical suffering have upon Roosevelt ?

Clearly, they intensified his intrinsic courage, his fighting quality and his stubborn refusal to yield. In a way, the ordeal he went through in the first years of his illness was in the nature of a purification that prepared him for the great tasks that lay ahead. More : his suffering gave him a new insight into the sufferings of others ; it sharpened his sensibilities and his latent human sympathy.

The ordeal was perhaps a much harder one for Eleanor. For almost from the start she knew of the hopelessness of the struggle Roosevelt was waging. Outwardly, though, she kept up her composure so as not to discourage her husband and the family. Furthermore, her household burdens increased. In the process of standing up to all this with confidence and courage, Eleanor Roosevelt blossomed into a remarkable woman.

Two factors helped Eleanor's transformation.

One, the struggle she had to wage with her mother-in-law, Sara Roosevelt, who was ever anxious to pull her son back from New York to complete retirement at Hyde Park. Eleanor realised only too well that retirement of

that kind would result only in slackening Roosevelt's hold on life itself. The hitherto docile daughter-in-law now asserted herself and refused to allow Sara have her way.

Two, the need for her to participate increasingly in New York's political life so as to keep her husband in the minds of the electorate. Within a short time of her decision to do so, Eleanor had acquired a considerable influence among the women voters in the district and a reputation as an expert campaigner.

Roosevelt himself was not keeping quiet. With the assistance of his friend and assistant, Louis Howe, he was taking, from his sick bed, an increasing part in the Democratic party's affairs in New York. In this, his enforced confinement to bed was, in certain ways, a blessing. For one thing, it saved him the bother of unnecessary movement from one place to another and enabled him to devote his time exclusively to politics.

Among other things he did during this period, Roosevelt gave considerable thought to the defects of the Democratic party machine and to repairing them so as to ensure a Democratic victory. This was to prove of much value and, indeed, paved the way for his own victory, later on.

CHAPTER V

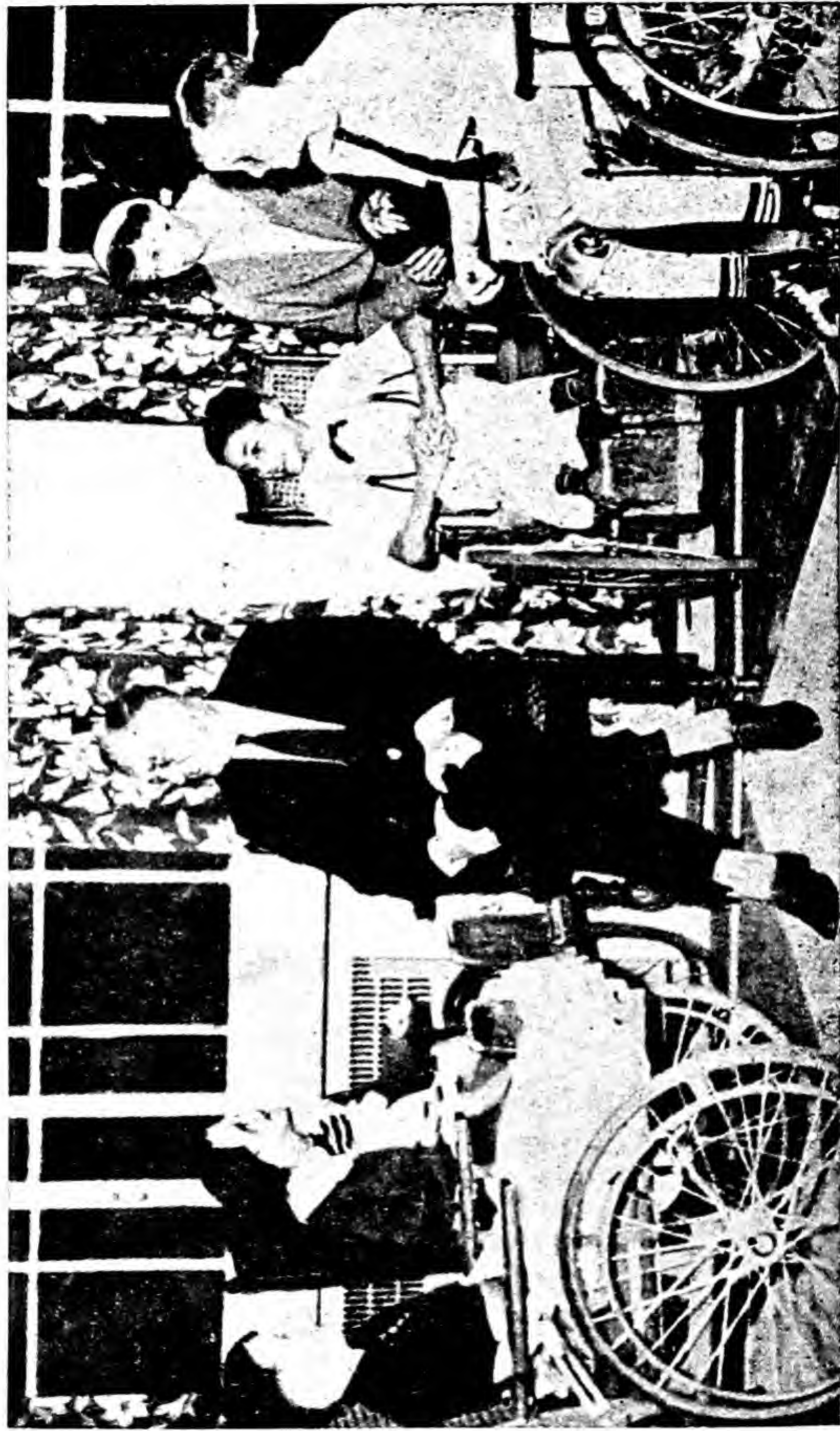
GOVERNOR

At no time during the long months when Roosevelt was fighting back to gain control of his muscles was he really away from political life. Indeed, through tireless correspondence he managed to continue to remain in the thick of it. From his bed he kept track of the course of Democratic party's politics in his State as in the nation. And he kept in close touch with the party politicians, high and low.

During this period Roosevelt happened to develop an intimate association with the noted Democratic leader Alfred E. Smith. This was an association that would pay him handsome political dividends not long afterwards. At the time of Roosevelt's election to the New York Senate, Alfred Smith had been the majority leader in the Assembly. He and young Roosevelt had stood in opposing camps in the famous struggle with Tammany over Sheehan. Since then, Al Smith had become Governor of the State. In 1922, when Roosevelt developed an attachment for him, Smith was trying for a second term as Governor. Roosevelt had been drawn to Al Smith primarily because he was far more progressive than other Democratic leaders ; also partly, for his opposition to men like William Randolph Hearst who were trying to get on to the Democratic party band wagon. Roosevelt actively supported Al Smith's re-election and helped him win almost effortlessly.



Franklin D., and Eleanor Roosevelt in their home with the "Bosun" and Maggie, the scotty (around 1950.)



The late President Franklin D. Roosevelt, with Mrs. Roosevelt, are shown visiting with young patients

Smith's good record in office as well as his victory in 1922 made him a natural candidate for President in 1924. Roosevelt was, from the beginning, among the keenest supporters of Smith's nomination by the party. In his eyes Smith was by far the best candidate in the field. It was only natural that he came to assume complete charge of Smith's pre-convention campaign for securing the Party's nomination. At the convention it was Roosevelt who made the speech nominating Smith. Brought to the rostrum in a wheel chair and walking up painfully on his crutches to the speaker's stand Roosevelt made a deeply stirring speech in favour of his friend. "He has a power to strike at error and wrongdoing that makes his adversaries quail before him," Roosevelt said, concluding : "He has a personality that carries to every hearer not only the sincerity but the righteousness of what he says." Then he added : "He is the happy warrior of the political battlefield." The speech received thunderous ovation.

Long after it was over, people were remembering that striking expression "happy warrior". To them the description seemed more appropriate to Roosevelt himself, a man on crutches and obviously in pain, but with a refusal to accept defeat and indeed with a buoyancy and an infectious enthusiasm that were heartening. As it happened, while Al Smith failed to win the nomination, Roosevelt had, in the process of making the nomination speech, made a great impression on the nation's politicians and on the general public. The *Herald Tribune* summed up the public reaction when it wrote that "from the time Roosevelt made his speech, he has been easily the foremost figure on the floor or

platform because without the slightest intention or desire to do anything of the sort, he had done for himself what he could not do for his candidate". Al Smith himself did not forget the speech.

It was logical, therefore, that two years later, in 1926, Roosevelt was offered the Democratic nomination for United States Senator from New York. But Roosevelt was not in a position to accept it. For one thing, he had just started a prolonged cure in the healing waters of Warm Springs. His muscles seemed to be responding well to the exercises in the water. And it would have been unwise to suspend the cure half-way for entry into active politics. Roosevelt resolved to put off further the date of his return to the political field. But, as it turned out, not for long.

In 1928, Al Smith was again trying earnestly for the Democratic nomination for President. His chances were now bright, much brighter than they had been four years before. Again, Roosevelt made the nomination speech in Smith's behalf. The latter won the nomination with little difficulty. With Al Smith out of the Governorship of New York, Democratic leaders had now to find someone who could slip into his place and keep the State safe for Democrats. The choice fell on Roosevelt. At the convention, when he was approached, he made no commitment. He could not make up his mind. It seemed still risky for him to interrupt his treatment at Warm Springs. The New York State Democratic Convention, however, meeting in September, took the matter out of his hands and nominated him for the Governorship. It was Al Smith who was largely responsible for the party draft. For he wanted a powerful running mate

in New York. Roosevelt had no choice but to accept the nomination.

His acceptance might have been a half-hearted affair, but he plunged into the election fray with his customary enthusiasm. In the three weeks that he had, he conducted a campaign that was characterised, as always, by informality and vigour. In his election campaign the Republican opposition repeatedly described him as a cripple brought in by Smith to bolster his own election chances. But Roosevelt's strenuous campaign itself offered an effective rebuttal to this charge. What doubts the people may have had about his physical capacity were soon dispelled.

Roosevelt won the election by a majority of some 25,000, while Al Smith himself lost the election. It was, again, a Republican year as Roosevelt had privately confessed to his colleagues months earlier. His own election was more in the nature of a personal triumph than a party one.

On January 1, 1929, Roosevelt assumed office as Governor of the State of New York.

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In office as Governor, Roosevelt had to contend with a predominantly Republican legislature ; and most of the legislature committee leaders were conservative old guards, who frowned invariably upon any progressive measure. Roosevelt was to clash head on with them more than once. While a lesser man would surely have been demolished in the process, Roosevelt won every time. His first clash with the Republican-dominated legislature was over the question of what was described as the executive budget. Under the arrangements then

existing, the Governor retained authority over the details of spending while general control was vested in the State Senate and the Assembly. In consequence, the budget became a plaything of politicians, a means for handing out favours and building up electoral support.

There was hardly any consideration of public good. Roosevelt, naturally, opposed this. His claim was that executive responsibility must be armed with adequate executive authority ; the existing arrangements were certainly against his having the necessary authority.

To outwit the Committee, Roosevelt sent a budget that was not clearly itemized. The legislators retaliated in the same way by returning a revised budget without indicating what items had been changed. Roosevelt promptly vetoed the budget, then represented his bill in the same form as before. The Republican Budget Committee returned it again in the same way as they had done earlier. A determined Roosevelt then took the matter to court. He lost his case in the lower New York Court, but the Court of Appeals upheld his contention broadly. To a great extent the budget was resurrected from the plaything of politicians that it had become.

Governor Roosevelt's second, and perhaps even more significant, clash with conservative Republican leaders in the legislature came a few months later, over an issue equally basic : public control of water power. Roosevelt had always favoured people's control over the exploitation of distribution of water power, as a matter of principle. But the old guard legislature leaders, doubtless influenced by strong private power interests, were deadly against such public control. In his inaugural address itself the Governor had mentioned a specific case, the waters of

St. Lawrence river where public control was called for. He had indicated that he would work for governmental exploitation of the unused power of the river. True to his word, within three months of assumption of office he prepared a plan for the purpose. This was actually a compromise plan, vesting in the State the authority for development of the power and transferring to private interests the transmission and distribution of the power generated. There remained then the difficult question of fixation of the rates. So far this had been done by the Public Service Commission, but Roosevelt considered this method ineffective. He proposed instead that contracts be made with transmitting and distributing companies which would assure a fair price to the consumers and a fair return to the companies.

With characteristic caution, Roosevelt proceeded with his plan step by step. First, he introduced a bill in the legislature asking for the creation of a committee to consider the entire question and prepare a plan. Since Roosevelt had already made a powerful impact upon the minds of the people regarding the basic justice of his demand, the legislature leaders had no choice but to accept his bill. The bill was soon passed and the St. Lawrence Power Development Commission was appointed immediately afterwards to make a study of the situation. The Commission's report which was not out till January, 1931, when Roosevelt had entered his second term as Governor, was broadly in agreement with the Governor's own proposals on the question.

When a bill was introduced later embodying a comprehensive plan for the development and distribution of St. Lawrence power, it met with expected opposition

from the majority leaders. Their's was not direct opposition, though. They hoped to nullify the bill through an amendment that would vest in their own hands the power to nominate the members of the Power Authority. Roosevelt saw through the stratagem. Bluntly he warned that he would take the issue to the people over the head of the legislature. The warning was effective. For he had by then acquired a mastery over the medium of radio, and through his informal and candid broadcasts he had established direct contact with the masses. The legislators knew this only too well. They duly yielded. Roosevelt's measure got through the legislature with little change.

The scheme was, however, not to be implemented until many years afterwards. For, any development scheme for the St. Lawrence which flowed from Canada into the United States had to be preceded by a treaty between the two countries over the exploitation of the river waters. This the Republican President, Herbert Hoover, refused to do. And New York State had no independent authority to enter into any such treaty. Roosevelt, though, had won a striking success.

Partly it was this that made possible the striking political success he won in his re-election in November 1930 for a second term. Yet another factor that contributed to his success was that he had given considerable attention during his first two years to activizing the Democratic party organization throughout the State. Roosevelt won his re-election by a majority of over 7,25,000 votes. His star was now steadily in the ascendant.

Throughout his two terms as Governor, Roosevelt worked hard to ensure a fair return to farmers, as he had promised them earlier. Even though he could not make much headway in this, he came to understand clearly the many and complex facets of the question and initiated a chain of measures which were to attain fruition on a national scale a few years later. As for labour, he worked progressively for reasonable conditions of work, increased wages and improvement in labour regulations. Concretely, he was able to secure a 48-hour week for women and children working in factories, no mean achievement in that day. In many ways thus, during his years as Governor of New York, Roosevelt was laying the foundation for his future work in the national administration. If he could not achieve much during those four years, it was because of the creeping depression which had paralyzed the nation and the State since October 1929. Roosevelt's time was taken-up increasingly with immediate measures to relieve the distress of the people of his State than with long-range reforms.

CHAPTER VI

NOMINATION AND ELECTION

Almost from the day Roosevelt was elected Governor of New York it was clear that he was the leading contender for the Democratic party's nomination for President in 1932. Few had doubts that he would secure it ; he was perhaps the only national figure with a progressive record and, this was more important, with great mass appeal. Roosevelt himself made no explicit commitment in the matter until many months after his re-election as Governor. Yet it was evident that he had already made up his mind to secure the nomination.

Early in 1931, it looked as if he would be nominated more or less unanimously. There was hardly any other candidate in sight at the time. Soon, however, there were many. As the days went on, and the economic depression deepened, the Republican party's record in office got ever more black and its chances of retaining the Presidency for another term grew ever more slim. A number of Democrats who had till then had no ambition towards the Presidency now started casting covetous eyes in that direction ; mostly, men with a firm grip over their regional party machines, if not with the same reputation or record as Roosevelt. As a result, the prospect of a unanimous nomination of Roosevelt kept steadily receding, even though he alone commanded impressive support within the party.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt holding his first press conference in his office at the White House after becoming President.



The leaders of the United States and Great Britain as they mapped plans for the Allied victory. This was the Casablanca Conference of 1943. The late President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill are in the front row.

This was the position when the balloting started at the Democratic convention in Chicago in June 1932.

In the first two ballots, Roosevelt failed by just a hundred votes to get the necessary two-thirds majority. And the way things were, it looked as if the convention would again be deadlocked as it had eight years before, and a comparative unknown finally chosen. This would surely affect the party's chances of victory in the elections, the poor record of the Republicans notwithstanding. It was realization of this that brought about a sudden, swift swing of votes to Roosevelt. Once this happened, the votes came to him in a veritable avalanche. Roosevelt was soon nominated by the convention with but a few dissenting votes.

Breaking what was almost a tradition, Roosevelt flew over from Albany to Chicago to accept the nomination personally. In a stirring speech in which he outlined a programme for national economic recovery, he solemnly declared : "I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a New Deal for the American people".

Roosevelt had used the words "new deal" almost casually but they immediately caught the imagination of the common people lying prostrate as a result of the depression. It was a new deal they were looking for.

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Only a few years earlier, the nation had been experiencing what seemed to be an extraordinary prosperity. Production had boomed, profits had soared and employment was to be had for the asking. The party in power had during the election promised 'a car in every garage and two chickens in every pot'. That promise seemed almost near fulfilment. Business thrived so much that the

'twenties came to be known as the Business Era. Stock-holding had become the craze of the day. Deluded by the apparent high profits of business, great masses of people had started 'playing' the stock market. Exploiting the situation, unscrupulous men floated companies with little or no financial backing and sold the stocks to unsuspecting buyers at high prices.

This clearly could not last long.

The stock market crashed on October 24, 1929. The slow decline in value of the previous few days developed abruptly that day into a headlong fall. As frightened stock-holders poured their stocks into the market to save what they could before it was too late, the values went down further still. Banks that had backed the sale and purchase of stocks by their constituents were dealt a severe blow. Many collapsed. So did many of the stock-holding companies ; and the stock-holders.

The stock market crash [was but one aspect, if the most dramatic, of the creeping economic depression. There had been similar shake-ups on the agricultural and industrial fronts as well.

In agriculture, prices had boomed to an all time high towards the end of the 1910s, as a result of the European War. Production had risen beyond all proportions. The boom was short-lived, though. For the end of the war and increasing competition from other nations quickly brought down the prices. When this happened, farmers steadily increased their production to make up their losses. But this only had the effect of bringing down prices further. Meanwhile, the instalments in farm mortgage fell overdue. With living itself become difficult many farmers surrendered their farmsteads. As the 'twenties

came to an end, a large number of farmsteads had been lost. And the farm-owners turned overnight into tenant farmers working on the very farms they had owned.

Industry had suffered, too. The industrialists had not long earlier raised high tariff walls to protect their prosperity. But other nations had retaliated with a total refusal to accept American goods. The result was that the nation's exports trickled down to an insignificant size. Key industries for whom exports were the main sustenance were badly affected. Some closed down altogether. The rest mercifully continued to produce, but the market for the goods kept shrinking progressively.

In an inevitable chain-reaction, the nation's banks were also afflicted by the agricultural and industrial crises.

Distress piled up in every direction.

As the depression deepened, it brought about a social division as well, the masses of the common people ranged against those whom they held responsible for the catastrophe.

President Herbert Hoover, who had only a short time earlier done effective work in the matter of relieving the distress of a Europe ravaged by war, found himself strangely ineffective when it came to relieving his own countrymen's distress. The crisis had apparently paralysed him, too. His efforts at relief vapoured out into weak, futile gestures.

It was a measure of the desperation that enveloped the country that the minds of people and the intelligentsia alike turned to other ways and other roads that were anathema to the way of life America had chosen for

herself. Faith in the values that had held the nation together down the years was markedly on the decline.

This was the situation that confronted the Democratic Presidential nominee, in that fateful autumn of 1931. No wonder his promise of a new deal immediately caught people's imagination.

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Roosevelt conducted his election campaign with the verve and thoroughness which had marked his earlier ones. His task was made considerably easier by the seeming ineffectiveness of the Republican administration headed by Herbert Hoover in the face of the nation-wide economic crisis. The Republicans had only a few years earlier taken credit for the apparent business prosperity in the country. Indeed, they had won the elections of 1928 on a slogan of prosperity. And, rightly or wrongly, they now stood charged in the eyes of the people with the responsibility for the depression. To gather support for himself, Roosevelt had merely to point attention to the worsening state of affairs in the nation and the helplessness of the administration. This was largely what he did.

He could himself offer no concrete programme of his own to offset this crisis. Partly, since no blanket solution or solutions were possible; partly, since his own New Deal was yet to be hammered out into tangible shape.

For this purpose, Roosevelt had collected around himself a set of brilliant young men from the universities. With their assistance, he was yet analysing the different problems of the day and trying to work out the lines in which the likely solutions lay. The great merit of this

group, which quickly came to be described as the 'Brain Trust', was that almost all who comprised it were experimental thinkers, not weighed down by any set of rigid doctrines. Characteristically, Roosevelt absorbed their ideas but without allowing them to dictate the policy or policies that he would follow.

He himself was not committed to any particular set of economic doctrines. The situation developing in the country was not one that could neatly be solved with a set of fixed ideas. At any rate, in his election campaign, he would not commit himself to any one particular theory or theories. Commitment to any theories was politically not prudent, and could deprive him of the valuable support of those opposed to those theories.

Whether Roosevelt offered a concrete programme of economic recovery to the people or left his plans vague, the outcome of the election itself had never been in doubt. What was uncertain was the size of the majority that Roosevelt would secure. As it turned out, he secured nearly seven million votes more than Herbert Hoover, carrying practically the entire nation with him. He also brought about a remarkable Democratic victory in the Senate as well as in the House of Representatives. In both Houses, the party secured very substantial majorities.

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Elections over, Roosevelt applied himself to the task of selecting his Cabinet. It was clear from the start that he would firmly retain in his own hands the reins of Government; that, for the first time in nearly two decades, the White House would have a really strong chief executive. The state of affairs in the nation also

demanded such firm, unified direction ; no effective action would be possible if authority was dissipated among many.

Roosevelt seemed to select men—and in one case a woman—for various posts in the Cabinet almost casually, but, in practically every case, on the basis of one main criterion : their capacity to put through the chosen programme smoothly. It was no coincidence that they were also people loyal to him and with confidence in his leadership. Such loyalty and confidence were vital if he was to make his programme effective. Herein, perhaps lay the main factor of Roosevelt's success as President.

The four months before his inauguration as President were devoted to intensive study and preparation for the great responsibilities that lay ahead. He spent the time in endless conferences with his advisers and friends. Meanwhile, the situation in the country deteriorated steadily. A frantic President Hoover kept appealing to the President-elect to confer with him and hammer out agreed solutions. Roosevelt, however, would have none of it. Perhaps he wanted to start with a clean slate ; any commitment to Hoover's policies might tie his hands and thwart his New Deal. Also, there was radical difference between the thinking of the two as to the causes of the growing crisis. Or perhaps, and this was equally likely, Roosevelt did not wish to be associated in any way with an administration that stood increasingly discredited in the eyes of the people.

At any rate, the President-elect kept the nation on its toes as to his programme of action.

CHAPTER VII

HUNDRED GREAT DAYS

On a cloudy day in March 1933, Roosevelt stood before the great crowd assembled in front of the Capitol in Washington for the inauguration and took the oath of his high office. Then he turned to face the gathering. In ringing tones he declared : "This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror..."

The gathering sat up. Likewise millions of people across the country, sitting round their radio sets and listening, sat up, electrified by the resonant words.

The nation's difficulties, Roosevelt continued, came from no failure of substance. "Plenty is at our doorstep," he said, "but a generous use of it languishes in the very sight of the supply. This is because rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed..., have admitted their failure, and abdicated...". He was referring to the financiers, stock brokers and others of their kind who had largely brought about the crisis. "The money-changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization." Then he added : "We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths. The measure of the restoration lies in the extent to which we apply social values more noble than mere monetary profit".

He then indicated the ways in which he would set about this restoration. The government would put people to work—the greatest primary task. People would be recruited directly, on an emergency basis, and employed on greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of the country's natural resources. Definite efforts would be made to raise the value of agricultural products and the power to purchase the output of cities. Government spending would be cut. Relief activities would be unified. There would be strict supervision of all banking and credit and investments ; and an end to speculation with other people's money. This would be his programme of action. This would be his New Deal.

The President ended his speech, with a prayer for divine guidance : “May He guide me in the days to come.”

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The immediate task that confronted President Roosevelt as he settled down in the White House after inauguration was to solve the bank crisis, bring about a quick recovery of prices, production and employment and restore people's confidence in the nation's economy. He addressed himself to the task with an infectious vigour and speed. Among other things he did on his first day in office, he called a special session of Congress to consider a variety of measures which he was still hammering out with his advisers. These were to be in the nature of a “quick hypodermic” that would stop the helpless drift in the economic situation.

Besides, the President ordered a national bank holiday with immediate effect. Between 1930 and March 1933 some five thousand banks, big and small, had closed their doors. And during one week alone, in particular, the

week ending with the Saturday on which the President was inaugurated, over a billion dollars of deposits had been withdrawn from the banks. Indeed, the entire banking system stood paralysed. To restore the confidence of the people in the banks and to safeguard the credit of the individual citizen were therefore of topmost importance. All banks in the country were closed under the President's order until the date of convening of the emergency session of Congress.

The first thing the President asked Congress, when it convened on March 9, was to ratify his action. He also asked for power to control the resumption of banking in a manner that would re-instil confidence in the people as to the solvency of their banking system. His bill to this effect was passed with little debate and on the opening day itself of the session.

This emergency Banking Act was to be the first in a long chain of unorthodox but potent measures which Roosevelt got through during that extraordinary session of Congress.

The Banking Act not only gave the President authority to place the banks of the nation under licence and to keep any bank closed for any period considered advisable by him ; it also gave him control of all transactions in foreign exchange and the right to impound all the gold in the country, if necessary. Solvent banks were reopened one by one during the following weeks. Some two thousand, whose affairs were entirely unsatisfactory, were wound up. Stability was brought back to the banking system and the nation's confidence in the system restored. The clamour for withdrawals died down almost completely. On another side, hoarded money started to flow back into

the banks. A long-range effect of the Act was that it greatly reduced bank failures for years afterwards.

Close on the heels of his banking measure and in a way as a compliment to it, the President sent Congress an Economy Bill that was even more drastic. Described by him as an "Act to maintain the credit of the United States Government", this courageous measure was designed to end excesses in governmental spending and enforce strict economies. Among other things it sought to give the President authority to reduce the salaries of Federal government servants as well as the pensions of war veterans. The latter were ever a touchy group; and there was at first noticeable hesitation on the part of even Democrats to approve of the measure. But, by and large, Congress was agreed that it was necessary to vest far-reaching powers in the President in order to curb spending. Within a week the Bill was passed. The effect of the measure was largely psychological: it convinced the people that the Roosevelt Administration meant business, even at the risk of unpopularity.

Two other notable measures were also presented and passed during that session with the objective of straightening out the nation's financial troubles. The first, the Securities Act, required that new issues of securities be registered with the Federal Trade Commission, and that prospective buyers be supplied with fullest data on the financial position of the companies. This measure was to lead to the creation, the following year, of the Securities Exchange Commission to supervise the stock market effectively. Speculative orgies, of the kind that had brought about the stock market crash two years earlier, were to be no more possible. The second was a

banking measure which created a system of federal guarantee of deposits under a federal Deposit Insurance Fund. What was more important, the Act separated investment banking from commercial banking.

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The bank crisis tackled, the President turned his attention to agriculture. On March 16, he sent Congress an agriculture bill which had the three-fold objective of raising farmer's purchasing power, relieving the pressure of farm mortgages and increasing the value of farm loans made by banks.

Explaining the measure, the President disclosed that the purchasing power of the farmer's income in 1932 was, on the whole, 40 per cent less than that of his 1929 income. The prices he obtained for his produce had steadily dwindled, while the taxes on his farm and the interest on his farm mortgage remained almost constant. The low prices for farm produce had led inevitably to increased production by the farmer in his anxiety to make ends meet. But increased production had only brought down prices further still in a vicious circle. More and more farmers went bankrupt. And farms were being foreclosed by the thousands. It was to check this unhappy situation that the President proposed his bill, perhaps the most drastic and far-reaching farm legislation ever proposed in peace time.

The Agriculture Adjustment Act, designed to promote agricultural recovery as well as reform, was passed by the House on March 22, and by the Senate five weeks later, with striking majority in both.

The "triple A", as Roosevelt called it, was an experimental and complicated measure. It sought to raise agri-

cultural prices and bring back to the farmer a tolerable livelihood through two principal means : (1) curtailment of production to reasonable levels and (2) subsidising of crops, where necessary, so as to ensure reasonable prices. In a variety of staple commodities—like cotton, wheat, tobacco, rice and hogs—the farmer was asked to curtail his output, in return for which he was offered monetary subsidies. To meet the large expense involved in these subsidies, a processing tax was levied on the affected commodities. The payments to farmers were based on a “parity” formula, which assured prices for agricultural commodities a purchasing power equivalent to what prevailed during pre-war years. In some ways, the Act was a drastic one. For instance, the government ordered the plowing under a fourth of the cotton crop so as to maintain the balance of prices that summer.

But the AAA rested on sound bases, and brought about, almost immediately, a near-magical recovery in the field of agriculture. Indirectly, through vastly increasing the purchasing power of the farmers, the Act also ensured a substantial market for consumption goods turned out by industry. In some measure, the Act thus spurred industrial recovery as well.

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The President next asked Congress for authority to start a sweeping programme of unemployment relief. The first step in this direction was to be the creation of a Civilian Conservation Corps, a federal organization with large funds and with the objective of putting unemployed young people to work on useful minor projects. Projects that would, in the President's words, “save the country's forest, soil and water resources from

depletion by means of small dams, the draining of marsh lands, planting of trees and effective prevention of forest fires". There were hundreds of thousands of able-bodied but unemployed young men in the spring of 1933. Over half of them came from cities. Almost all of them were expected to afford some assistance towards the support of their families. They wanted work, work of any kind.

The CCC soon came into being and drafted most of these young people into hundreds of thousands of programmes all over the country. CCC offices set up in cities enrolled all willing young men, transported them to the camp sites and enabled them to start work without delay. Some three lakh youths were absorbed in the CCC programmes in the first months of its inauguration alone. The healthful and vigorous outdoor life and the growing sense of usefulness lifted the morale of youth in a manner little short of miraculous.

As the second part of his relief programme, the President asked Congress for powers to provide adequate grants to the States for direct unemployment relief. The Hoover Administration had been opposed to such direct aid. But in Roosevelt's view, provision of relief to the needy was the direct concern of the Federal Government although the States and local communities were not absolved of responsibility in the matter ; federal initiative would indeed be a challenge to local officials to stimulate their efforts. Congress readily agreed with him and the Federal Emergency Relief Act was passed with near-unanimity.

A Federal Emergency Relief Administration was set up under the Act with a sum of five hundred million

dollars immediately made available to it. Roosevelt's energetic friend Harry Hopkins was appointed Administrator of the FERA. A significant feature of his work was that side by side with providing relief, people were encouraged to engage in some sort of work rather than remain idle.

Thirdly, the President asked for authority to start a labour-creating public works programme. This he included in a broader measure for industrial recovery called the National Industrial Recovery Bill, which was accepted and passed on June 16. Over three billion dollars were to be invested under the works programme in public construction activities of a permanent kind, providing direct employment to the largest possible number of people. Whatever there was slackening of industry, these public works were to be immediately put into operation so as to provide alternative employment to those affected.

The Public Works Administration, when it was set up, did a great deal to relieve unemployment. By early 1934, a million men had been taken off the relief rolls and engaged in the growing public works programme. Critics of the PWA, though, complained that it did not move fast enough to be truly effective.

What was noteworthy about President Roosevelt's three-fold emergency relief programme was its dominant accent on provision of work. Work, as the President realized too well, was what the people wanted: "work, with all the moral and spiritual values that go with it." In his view, relief was not, must never be, a matter of doles; that would be ineffective, wasteful, even demeaning. On the other hand, healthy and fruitful work,

side by side with needed immediate assistance, would raise morale and aid swift economic recovery. It did. Whatever the criticism later on against the President's relief-cum-work programme, practically all were agreed that it infused a new spirit in the masses ; and that this, in turn, greatly speeded up national recovery.

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The main portion—the heart, as it were—of the National Recovery Act called for “a concrete co-operative movement throughout industry in order to obtain wide re-employment, shorten the working week, pay a decent wage for the shorter week, and prevent unfair competition and disastrous over-production”; and through these means, it sought to bring about industrial recovery and reform.

The crisis in the industry, the President held, had been brought on largely by starvation wages and long hours of work. Instead, “if all employers in each competitive group agree to pay their workers the same wages—reasonable wages—and require the same hours—reasonable hours—then higher wages and shorter hours will hurt no employer. Moreover, such action is better for the employer than unemployment and low wages, because it makes for more buyers for his product.” This was the simple and sound idea at the root of the Industrial Recovery Act. All industries agreeing to so cooperate were each to have a common “code”, that would be strictly adhered to thereafter.

The textile industry was the first to evolve such a code for itself. Others followed suit not much later. Soon a blanket agreement was drawn up incorporating the features common to these codes, and circulated

among all employers in the country. The latter were only too willing to sign it.

Criticism of the NIRA was, as with other measures, not wanting. It was said, for instance, that the Act encouraged monopoly. Its code-making powers were also to be declared unconstitutional by the courts later. Meanwhile, it worked with striking success. A substantial proportion of the closed factories reopened. And useful work was provided to a vast number of idle men and women. Fair wages were assured as well as improved working conditions. Child labour was virtually abolished. Unfair competition in industry was eliminated and near-normalcy restored.

More important in its long-range effects was the Act's provision for collective bargaining. This provision assured labour the right to bargain with employers through representatives of their own choice; in other words, through the trade unions. This was the beginning, the foundation, upon which the great American trade union movement of today has been built.

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On April 10, the President asked for legislation to create an authority for the Tennessee river valley which would plan for the proper use, conservation and development of the natural resources of the river's drainage basin and adjoining territory. The President had in mind a sweeping programme to harness the river waters in the service of the people of the seven States through which it flowed; a programme that would tackle every aspect of development of that vast under-developed region—reforestation, reclamation, power generation, flood control and agricultural improvement. The measure also involved

extensive public ownership and control. Roosevelt had always fought for public control over the exploitation of water resources. The Tennessee Valley Authority Bill was but an extension of his earlier work in this regard. The Bill was passed on May 18, and the Tennessee Valley Authority came into being shortly afterwards. Considered as perhaps the most abiding monument of Roosevelt's New Deal, the TVA has over the years brought about a far-reaching transformation of life in the river valley. A remarkable piece of regional planning, the TVA is an example now sought to be emulated by many developing countries including India.

Another measure the President asked that special session of Congress to pass had for its aim the saving of small home mortgages from foreclosure. Hundreds of thousands of small homes had been lost during the previous three years because of the owners' inability to pay off their mortgages in time. This was perhaps the most tragic aftermath of the economic depression and a major reason for the loss of morale among the masses. Roosevelt's measure sought to provide assistance to small home owners so as to protect them from such foreclosures. It also sought the relief of a part of the burden of excessive interest and principal payments incurred earlier. Presenting the measure, the President declared that the interest of the nation required that special safeguards should be thrown round home ownership as a guarantee of social and economic stability. And the protection of home owners from enforced liquidation at a time of general distress was, he said, the proper concern of the Government.

On June 13, the Home Owners Loan Corporation Act

was passed. The President followed up its signing with a national appeal to holders of such mortgages not to press proceedings for foreclosure until the mortgagors could get aid under the Act. By 1936 the HOLC had saved well over a million homes which would have been lost but for its assistance.

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The extraordinary session of Congress which considered Roosevelt's emergency programme adjourned on June 16. It had been in session for exactly a hundred days : a hundred great days, during which President Roosevelt had put his new deal programme under way. For the mass of new laws that had been enacted were "but the orderly component parts of a connected and logical whole"—the New Deal. The emergency session, as he remarked later, had "boldly seized the opportunity to right great wrongs, to restore clearer thinking and more honest practices". It has been said that Roosevelt did more to alter the basic structure of the nation's economic life in those one hundred days than anybody else had done in one hundred years.

The President's work during those hundred days had a magical effect on the nation. The common people were lifted out of their benumbed stupor, a new wave of confidence swept over the land and ; more important, the man of action in the White House spurred the nation to act with similar boldness and determination. Employment started to grow. So did industrial production. Life gradually returned to the countryside. The threat to the American economy and to the values the country had stood for, a threat which not many months earlier had assumed serious proportions, had clearly passed.

CHAPTER VIII

LONG-RANGE MEASURES

During the first hundred days, an enthusiastic leader described President Roosevelt as a Moses leading his people out of the wilderness. This was a most appropriate description. Through bold measures, the President had indeed led the American people out of the economic wilderness they had found themselves in. His success during those first days was due largely to his own firm, courageous leadership. It was also due, at least in part, to the willingness of the politicians to drown their differences and strengthen the President's hands, once they sensed the prevailing public mood. But this happy accord did not last long. The selfsame Congress that had approved without demur practically the entire emergency legislation programme the President had placed before it, was later to be not so unquestioning. It was even to be obstructionist. Perhaps this was a natural reaction. For, when the crisis passed, the politicians started viewing the President's policies from their own sectional perspectives. They supported or opposed them as their own local and personal interests dictated. Thus, as the months went by, Roosevelt's new deal came to meet with some opposition. Though not of much consequence at first, the opposition grew steadily.

Criticism of the President's policies was broadly of two kinds. The conservatives thought the collective action involved in the emergency measures was a threat to the

nation's basic faith in a rugged individualism. The left-wingers among politicians declared, on the other hand, that the President's programme was not radical enough, that it had touched but the fringes of the problem. Specifically, the charge was made that the variety of new Federal machinery set up to tackle the gigantic relief programmes had lost control over them, that money was being wasted. And it was not without some truth. In particular, the National Recovery Administration had not been as universally helpful as at first it had been expected to be. What was worse, it had allowed the stronger sections in different fields of industry to gain dominance over the weaker ones. The President took due note of this criticism. He promptly changed the man at the helm of the NRA and effected improvements in its working. Similarly, the AAA could not extend its benefits to all types of farmers nor to all parts of the country. The President took note of this criticism as well and gradually extended the AAA's application to cover every farming group.

Such opposition, from the Right as from the Left, might have frustrated the new deal but for one factor. This was the President's remarkable hold over the great masses of people, acquired through the media of the Radio and the Press. A few days after inauguration as President, Roosevelt had spoken directly and informally to the people over the radio, in what he described as a "fireside chat", on the problems that faced the nation, and had thereby mobilised support for his emergency programme. These informal "fireside chats" were continued at regular intervals. The President kept reporting to the people, in simple, homely terms, on the day-to-day problems

facing the country and on the means adopted to solve them. He spoke with transparent sincerity and candour and in a warm, vibrant tone, which took him straight to their hearts. The President also revived the custom of holding informal Press conferences at the White House. Newspaper correspondents are generally hardboiled men not easily susceptible to charm nor easily duped. But soon these too came under Roosevelt's spell. They were impressed by his manifest courage, by his mental vigour and by his disarming candour. If the "fireside chats" brought the masses firmly to his side, his Press conferences converted a substantial section of the nation's Press into his potent ally.

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In the Congress session held towards the end of Roosevelt's first year in office, some more of his new deal measures were put through without much opposition.

Chief among these was the Gold Reserve Act. The Act enabled the Government to secure firm control over the gold value of the dollar and the right to determine, from time to time, the extent and nature of the nation's gold reserves. This was but a reinforcement to the first Banking Act passed in March, 1933. A provision to impound the nation's gold was already there.

The President had a variety of other measures also to consolidate the programme already put through. The New Deal laws of the great hundred days had, when they got into motion, brought about substantial increases in industrial production, prices and profits; they had brought some amount of stability to the agricultural sector. But, these had all benefitted only certain sections. There

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were yet vast masses of people whom the new deal had not touched in any considerable measure. Moreover, the work done had been primarily in the nature of short-term relief. It had been but a quick hypodermic, as Roosevelt described it. The nation had now to be placed under a long course of treatment.

By early 1934, Roosevelt had broadly decided upon the long-range measures necessary to consolidate the work done during the first phase of his new deal. But he was shrewdly aware that it was not wise to keep Congress continuously at fever pitch. He, therefore, postponed sending the measures to Congress for its consideration. Actually, not until January, 1935, did Roosevelt present his long-term proposals to Congress.

Presenting them, he told Congress that they were designed to establish ultimately the three securities necessary for all people of the nation ; "one, the security of livelihood through better use of national resources and the land in which we live ; second, the security against the major hazards and vicissitudes of life ; and third, the security of decent homes".

Perhaps the most far-reaching among the measures presented to the 1935 session of Congress and passed by it, was the Social Security Bill. The Bill provided for unemployment compensation, old-age benefits, including compulsory and voluntary annuities, assistance to dependent children and arrangements for the protection and care of neglected homeless children. Roosevelt told Congress : "No one can guarantee this country against the dangers of future depressions, but we can reduce these dangers. We can eliminate many factors that cause economic depression and we can provide the means

of mitigating their results. This plan for economic security is at once a measure of prevention and a method of alleviation." Congress passed his bill more or less in the form in which he presented it. Surprising as it may seem now, there was no old-age or unemployment insurance in America until this Act came into being.

A little before this was passed, another major legislation affecting one of the biggest sectors of the nation's population had been accepted. This was the National Labour Relations Act, perhaps the most radical measure of the new deal and one of the most important laws in American history. The act guaranteed to labour the right to collective bargaining and thus enabled them to organise themselves into independent and effective labour unions. There had been, as we have seen, a provision to this effect in the National Industrial Recovery Act itself, but in May 1935, the Supreme Court had declared the Act invalid. The new Act restored to the workers the right of self-organisation for collective bargaining ; and it provided methods by which the Government could safeguard that legal right. A National Labour Relations Board was established to supervise the implementation of the Act.

During the same year the Works Programme Administration was created. This was designed to remedy the drawbacks in the working of the earlier relief programme, and reorganize it so as to ensure effective centralized planning and responsibility for all relief work in the country. The WPA sought to provide work to all those on relief rolls who were "employables", who could be put to work. Over four billion dollars were placed at its disposal. The President asked the agency to undertake

useful and well-planned projects which could afford permanent improvement in living conditions or create new wealth for the nation. He also called on it to engage a large percentage of direct labour and serve the greatest unemployment needs.

Harry Hopkins was, again, placed in charge of the WPA. An ambitious programme was quickly undertaken, with projects in conservation, public construction, even public health and adult education. Described as the largest public works programme ever attempted by any Government, the WPA employed some three million men and women. And it led to useful and quickly tangible construction works of a myriad variety all over the land. These ranged from sewers and small bridges to school buildings and post offices. A significant feature of the WPA's work was that it found employment for unemployed artists, musicians, actors and writers as well.

There was some wastage of money no doubt in this programme and some inefficiency in certain sectors of work. But these were inevitable in any large works programme of this kind. At any rate, the WPA's impressive results more than offset its shortcomings.

The WPA had, besides, many interesting off-shoots. One of these was the Rural Electrification Administration, established "to initiate, formulate, administer and supervise" all programmes for generation, transmission and distribution of electricity in rural areas. The REA provided the money and the WPA the labour required for a dynamic extension of electric power in the countryside. Another important derivative of the WPA was the National Youth Administration designed to provide unemployed young people either higher education or useful

employment. Yet another was the Resettlement Administration which sought to shift peasants from land of low productivity to relatively fertile areas.

Measures were also taken during 1935 to strengthen further the existing banking legislation. The Tennessee Valley Authority Act was similarly reinforced. Roosevelt also took steps to save the Agricultural Adjustment Act from the fate that had befallen the NIRA at the hands of the Courts. He asked for suitable amendments to the Act so as to make it unobjectionable in all respects. The Supreme Court was, however, to declare even this amended Act unconstitutional.

During the same session, Roosevelt presented to Congress drastic tax measures which sought to correct basic imbalances in the national economy resulting from great accumulations of wealth by individuals and families. Such accumulations, in his view, led to undesirable concentration of control by relatively few individuals over the employment and welfare of many others. He, therefore, recommended a tax upon all inherited wealth. He suggested, besides, a definite increase in the taxes on individual net incomes. Despite opposition, his measures were accepted without change.

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The first years in office of President Roosevelt marked also a gradual shift in American thinking in regard to foreign affairs : a shift no less creditable than, if perhaps not as perceptible as, the shift the President had brought about in domestic affairs.

Roosevelt had always been an internationalist, unlike most other leading Americans of the day. He firmly believed that America could not, forever, refuse to be

concerned with the fate of other nations. He held that "no nation could keep itself out and remain unaffected if a powerful conflagration swept over the rest of the world". This would be an act of not only base selfishness, but of clear unwisdom. World peace could be brought about only through firm and concerted action by all.

He had ardently supported Wilson's proposals on the League of Nations. He had even based his election campaign for the Vice-Presidency on this issue. But, unlike Wilson, Roosevelt was a practical realist. He realized clearly that, without the support of—or at least lack of opposition from—the law-makers in Washington, he could do little. This had been the situation in the late 1910s, and this was the situation in the early 1930s. Isolationism, the view that America should have nothing to do with foreign nations whatever happened, remained entrenched among most of the country's politicians.

All the while, tensions kept mounting in Europe. Two vicious dictators had emerged on that disturbed continent and were growing more powerful with every passing day. In Geneva, the League of Nations kept whimpering towards its expected end. The nations which could have done something to halt the deterioration remained weak and fumbling.

As early as April 1933, Roosevelt started holding conferences with international leaders to discuss world problems. In May, he issued a personal appeal to the heads of governments, suggesting a non-aggression pact among them and the elimination of excessive armaments. These were little more than gestures; but they could not be otherwise.

Simultaneously, he kept up his efforts to change his own people's thinking, and bring about a more realistic attitude towards the conflagration that was smouldering abroad. But isolationist opinion in the country was patently stronger. In the face of the crisis abroad, legislative measures were being brought in with a strong isolationist base. The President, however reluctant, had to sign them. The first of such measures banned the floating of loans in America by nations which had defaulted on repayment of war debts. An even stronger measure was the Neutrality Act of August, 1935, which banned export of arms to all belligerents in the event of war abroad.

At the time the Neutrality Act was passed, Italy was actively preparing to invade a helpless Abyssinia. In the Far East, war was already raging between China and Japan. Nevertheless, Roosevelt signed the measure, somewhat to the surprise of the internationalists in the country. He could not do otherwise, without totally antagonizing the leaders on Capitol Hill. And it happened that he had many urgent domestic measures to be put through with their support. Roosevelt signed the measure under protest, with the stern warning that situations might arise in which the inflexible provisions of the Act would have exactly the opposite effect from what was intended. "These provisions might drag us into war instead of keeping us out", he stated bluntly.

The Neutrality Act imposed an embargo on sale of arms to aggressors and their victims alike. On the other hand, the President desired that victims of aggression should be kept out of its purview, that the embargo should apply only to aggressors. In this, he was more than justified. For, while the Act had the effect of stop-

ping all assistance to small nations that were victims of dictators on the Continent and elsewhere, the latter managed to circumvent it and secure almost a continuous flow of war materials. The President, however, could do no more than keep the nation alive to this dangerous anomaly. Also, he nourished the hope that the Act could be revised suitably when it came up for renewal a few months later ; that he could then gain discretion in the matter of application of the arms embargo. But the power of the isolationists was such that the President was disappointed in his hope. In February 1936, the embargo was reconsidered and was extended without any change whatever. With elections around the corner, the President quietly acquiesced.

Meanwhile, the threatened invasion of Abyssinia by Italy had taken place ; Hitler had occupied the Rhineland ; and in Spain, General Franco had become a power to reckon with. In his State of the Union message in January 1936, the President solemnly warned that a point had been reached "where the people of America must take cognizance of growing illwill, of marked trends towards aggression, of increasing armaments, of shortening tempers—a situation, which has in it many of the elements that lead to the tragedy of a general war."

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Late in June, the Democratic Party met at Philadelphia to select its nominee for the Presidential election the next winter. This was a formal affair. There had never been any doubt about Roosevelt's being its nominee again ; nor would there have been any reason for its deciding otherwise. For Roosevelt was no longer a citizen merely of one State, but a son of all 48 States of the

Union. His nomination was accepted with uproarious acclaim.

As he had done four years before, Roosevelt again went to the convention to accept the nomination personally. His acceptance speech was, in many ways, a forerunner of the campaign he would wage later. In that speech he took issue with the bitter critics of the New Deal, men whom he described as "economic royalists" and "privileged princes of new economic dynasties". These had maintained that while political freedom was the business of government, economic slavery was nobody's business. But he stood committed to the proposition that freedom was no half and half affair. If the average citizen was guaranteed equal opportunity in the polling place, he must have equal opportunity in the market place, too.

Harsh as these words were, they were not unjustified. The conservatives in the Democratic Party had almost all left to join the camp opposed to Roosevelt. A vicious campaign had been let loose in the press and among the public, a campaign that stung the normally moderate Roosevelt into meeting their challenge with vigour.

The Republicans on the other hand seemed to have realized the worth of the New Deal programme so much that they supported it in their own election platform: whatever Roosevelt did, they said, they could do too, and better. Their candidate was a moderate from Kansas, Governor Alfred M. Landon, a soft-spoken liberal with considerable popular appeal. Ranged against Roosevelt on another side was a candidate of the newly organized Union Party, a strange conglomeration of extremists.

Roosevelt remained assured in the face of the multi-pronged campaign against him and his policies. To a great extent, he tried to steer clear of contentious discussion and based his campaign almost entirely on his New Deal record. He had much to feel happy about. The New Deal had brought about a substantial improvement in the nation's economy; it had brought employment to millions of unemployed; it had brought security for the sick and the aged. More than all else, it had brought about a new condition in the relations among men. The New Deal, said Roosevelt in an election speech, had instilled in the relations among different classes some of "the equality and dignity that marked the old American dream".

His campaign was again the happy, gay, jocular affair it had always been. Wherever he went, record crowds gathered to listen him; even it seemed, just to see his infectious smile. He brought cheer and goodwill wherever he visited. And to one severely drought-stricken area, he brought his own luck. The rain came down in torrents during his visit to the area.

In a speech towards the end of the campaign, Roosevelt outlined the programme he would follow on re-election. Promising a further extension of the New Deal, he said, "I should like to have it said of my first administration that in it the forces of selfishness and lust for power met their match. I should like to have it said of my second administration that in it these forces met their master."

The crowd roared with delight.

The election results were far more staggering than even Roosevelt had hoped for. He won over Landon by some

eleven million votes. Hanging on to his coat tails, the Democratic party too had won a sweeping victory. In the new House of Representatives, the Democrats secured 334 seats against the 89 of the Republicans. In the Senate, they secured 75 seats,

CHAPTER IX

A FIGHT WITH THE SUPREME COURT

Roosevelt's second inaugural address was, as expected, a pledge to extend further the New Deal programme. For, a third of the nation still remained "ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished". But such extension would by no means be easy. There was, at least in the President's mind, one major obstacle in the way of active translation of his pledge into deeds : the obstructionist attitude of the Supreme Court towards practically all New Deal legislation.

As early as in May 1935, the Court had by a unanimous decision declared the vital code-making provisions of the National Industrial Recovery Act to be unconstitutional. It had held the view that the code-making power sought to be conferred on the President was "an invalid application of legislative power". Reacting with some impatience, the President had called it an antiquated view. But that judgment was only the first in a long, frustrating series.

By another crucial decision, seven months later, the Court dealt an equally severe blow to the Agricultural Adjustment Act. It held that it was unconstitutional for the Federal Government to demand processing taxes under the Act. The Judges questioned further the right of Congress to spend money for regulating agricultural production in the country ; this was a matter that pertained only to local welfare, so beyond Federal jurisdiction.

Implied in the judgment was also a serious doubt whether Congress could act with self-restraint in all such matters ; whether it was not tending to become "a parliament of the whole people, subject to no restrictions save as were self-imposed". A minority among the Judges, however, dissented and said this was a tortured construction of the Constitution. These laid down that the power to tax and spend included also "the power to relieve nation-wide economic maladjustment by conditional gifts of money".

Seemingly unperturbed, the President received news of the judgment with a smile. He was apparently working out some kind of a plan to fight the Supreme Court's obstructionism. Such counteraction was unavoidable if the progressive measures of the New Deal were not to be frustrated under some pretext or other. The President was increasingly convinced of the need for such counteraction as, during the months that followed, the Supreme Court went on to declare unconstitutional one after another of the New Deal legislation.

To be sure, there were occasional crumbs : for instance, the Tennessee Valley Authority Act was declared valid. But the Court's basic attitude to the New Deal remained, by and large, unaltered. On June 1, 1936, on the eve of the Democratic Convention, the Court declared invalid New York State's Minimum Wage Law and, by implication, similar laws of other States as well. The decision did not concern the New Deal directly ; but, it indicated clearly the attitude of the majority of the Court on economic and social legislation. The President kept watching the situation as the Supreme Court proceeded on its fantastic course.

Did these decisions mean that the Federal Government had no right to enter into a solution of a national economic problem? Were all such problems to be decided only by the States? More basically, did the Federal Government have no right at all to take any part in trying to improve social conditions? Roosevelt had raised these questions on hearing of the Court's decision on the NRA. On the June decision on Minimum Wage Law, he commented that "it served further to emphasize the no-man's land in which neither the Congress nor the legislatures of the several States could use their power to promote the economic and social welfare of employees of mines, shops and factories." The Supreme Court had struck at the very roots of the New Deal. "It became obvious", Roosevelt later said, "that the advance of recovery and reform begun by Congress and the Executive in the year of crisis was being nullified by a barrier which read: 'The Court Disapproves'."

The nine Justices of the Supreme Court were not all opposed to Roosevelt's progressive measures. Almost invariably, the decisions against the New Deal were those of the four extreme conservatives on the Bench, men who firmly believed in the old concepts of *laissez faire* and rugged individualism. More or less opposed to these were three others who could broadly be described as liberals. In between these two groups were Chief Justice Hughes and Justice Roberts. The Chief Justice was a seasoned politician who had been elevated to the Bench for his services by President Coolidge; and a liberal in his general outlook. Yet he found it convenient almost always to deal with his conservative colleagues than with the pro-

gressive ones. It was this that led to the surprising chain of decisions against the New Deal.

Almost all the Justices had already been on the Bench for a sizeable number of years. Their average age was well over 70 : "the most aged court in American history", Roosevelt called it. In other words, as puzzled progressives suspected, most of the Justices were not quite in touch with the needs of a fast changing era.

By January 1936, Roosevelt was ready to act. In his first message after his second inauguration he presented to a startled Congress the outline of a Judiciary Reorganization Bill. This would empower the President to appoint a new Justice, up to a total of six, for every Justice who did not retire within six months after reaching the age of 70. At that time six Justices had passed that age, but not a single vacancy occurred on the Bench in recent years.

The proposal stirred up a hornet's nest—in Congress as well as in the nation. The immediate reactions to the proposal were that the President was trying to 'pack' the Court with his own men who would approve each and every measure of his ; that this amounted to a wholly unwarranted and open interference with the judiciary by the executive ; that the sanctity of the Supreme Court was being rudely impaired. The Supreme Court, when all was said and done, commanded in the nation the same veneration as the Constitution itself : to interfere with its working was far from creditable.

Congress and the country were divided on the question. One section realised the need to do something to check the Court's headlong course. The rest were opposed to any effort at impairing the Court's sanctity. The President

himself was not bent upon doing anything calculated to impair the Court's sanctity. All that he was concerned about was to find a solution to what seemed a wilfully obstructionist attitude adopted by a majority of members of the Court. The nation's welfare was at stake. And he could not stand by and watch one after another of the Federal legislative acts designed to ensure it being declared unconstitutional. The question so far as he was concerned, was simple. "Was the electorate to be powerless to insist upon solution of its national problems through its Congress, without having to risk judgments of unconstitutionality based not on constitutional limitations, but on the personal predilections of five justices not elected by it"? The Court was comprised of men mostly appointed by conservative Presidents in the past. These were now passing what were clearly economic and political judgments, on a liberal programme of recovery and reform.

Roosevelt's proposal for reorganization of the judiciary was not hasty or ill-thought out. For over a year he had been pondering the matter, had held consultations with his advisers and had considered a variety of solutions put forward. Again, the charge had been made that he was trying to 'pack' the Court. Such packing had been resorted to before by other Presidents with the objective of securing favourable decisions. Roosevelt was certainly not guilty of this. At any rate, 'packing' was no solution to the problem. For, as years went by, the new members of the Court and their successors might themselves fall into a conservative mould, especially since there was life tenure of position. What Roosevelt was proposing was totally different: a "continuous and recurrent addition

to the Bench of new blood, new vigour, new experience and new outlook."

While controversy raged over the issue among Congress members as well as among the public, a surprising thing happened. Some nine weeks after the President had outlined his measure to Congress, the Supreme Court came forward with a decision upholding the National Labour Relations Act, a vital legislation of the New Deal. This was a complete turn about. Clearly, the growing criticism from a substantial section of the people over the Court's obstructionist attitude had at last had its effect. As a delighted Roosevelt pointed out, it was still the same Court, with the same Justices ; no new appointments had been made and yet what a change ! The change might surely never have come about if he had not made a frontal attack upon the philosophy of the majority of the Court.

The Court upheld, a few weeks later, another important New Deal measure, the Social Security Act. And more such decisions followed. The result, expectedly, was that Roosevelt's Judicial Reorganisation Bill lost its urgency as well as its base. There no longer was necessary an injection of new blood. Some five weeks later an even more interesting development took place. Justice Deventer, one of the conservative four on the Bench, resigned.

When the Senate Judiciary Committee met in session about that time to consider the President's new measure, it voted against it. An amended measure was then brought forward. Some kind of a compromise, this provided for appointment by President of only one Judge a year for any Justice who had reached 75 but failed to

retire from the Bench. It looked as if the amended measure would get through Congress, but suddenly its chief advocate, the influential Senator Robinson, died. Losing their leader, supporters of the measure fell into disarray. With the result that a mangled version of the measure, with its teeth taken away and providing for only minor judicial reforms, was ultimately passed.

The President had lost the battle, but he had won the war. The New Deal programme had been saved.

CHAPTER X

END OF THE NEW DEAL

The favourable conclusion of what came to be known as the "Court fight" led naturally to a spurt of fresh New Deal legislation. The President took up first the question of re-enacting those sections of the NRA which had provided for national standards of wages and hours. In a special message to Congress, he outlined a measure that would "protect the fundamental interests of free labour and a free people." He suggested that only goods which had been produced under conditions which met the minimum standards of free labour should be admitted to inter-State commerce. His measure was designed primarily to afford protection to the large masses of working people who belonged to no labour union and therefore not directly benefited by the Labour Relations Act. The Fair Labour Standards Bill, as it was called, ran at first into considerable opposition from private interests and labour representatives alike. It was passed finally a year later with some alterations, but retaining the essence of the original.

Another vital measure, passed early in 1937, was the Farm Tenancy Bill, the new AAA as it came to be described, designed to protect tenant-farmers, share-croppers and farm labourers, who were not benefited by earlier farm programmes. The measure asked for first, liberal credit on long term to tenants, with the requisite ability and experience to enable them turn into farm-owners ;

second, loans to prevent small owners from slipping into tenancy ; third, retirement by public agencies of land proved unsuitable for farming ; and fourth, concerted action by State and local agencies of Government to improve the general leasing system. In effect, the President was retrieving the beneficial clauses of the Agricultural Adjustment Act which a few months earlier the Supreme Court had held unconstitutional. He was adding, besides, a few more provisions found necessary from experience.

During that Congress session early in 1937, the President proposed a few other important measures as well : for low-cost housing ; for reorganization of the executive ; and for creation of developmental machinery in every region patterned after the Tennessee Valley Authority. Of these the housing bill alone got through that session. The rest were to be passed by Congress only the following year ; and, as it happened, after considerable mangling. For one thing, an economic recession had developed meanwhile and the President was for most of the time engaged in devising measures to fight it.

The President's bill for reorganization of the executive was not taken up for discussion until early in 1938. The bill sought complete reorganisation of the executive branch of the Government in order to make it more efficient and economical : Among other things, it called for a slight enlargement of the President's immediate staff and the streamlining of the many agencies enforcing the New Deal programme. The measure ran into a surprisingly virulent opposition. The cry was raised, for instance, that the President was seeking to enlarge his authority beyond all reasonable proportions ; that indeed

the bill had in it the seeds of possible dictatorship. Earlier, the bill on hours and wages had run into similar opposition, but without the present virulence.

Newspapers opposed to Roosevelt played up the 'dictator' theme for all it was worth. The President remained unmoved. Months earlier, while recommending the bill he had denied that he was asking for an increase in the powers of the Presidency. As established in the Constitution the Presidency had already all the powers that were required. What he was asking for were the tools of management and authority to distribute the work so that he could effectively discharge the powers the Constitution placed in him. Later, as the "dictatorship" propaganda grew in volume, the President felt it necessary to write to the chairman of the Joint Committee of Congress considering the Bill categorically stating his position. He wrote : "A : I have no inclination to be a dictator. B : I have none of the qualifications which would make me a successful dictator. C : I have too much historical background and too much knowledge of existing dictatorships to make me desire any form of dictatorship for a democracy like the United States of America." In a "fireside chat" to the nation, similarly, he pointed out that dictatorships grew not out of strong and successful Governments but out of weak and helpless ones. Temporarily, because of the calculated propaganda against it, his bill was killed. Months afterwards, however, it was taken up, drastically pruned and passed.

In his inaugural address some sixteen months earlier, the President had referred to the "one-third of the nation ill-clad, ill-fed and ill-housed." He had then indicated a powerful expansion of the New Deal to meet the

problems of these. So far, however, he had brought but a few major measures. These too were more in the nature of plugging the holes caused by Supreme Court judgments on the earlier New Deal legislation. The new AAA, for instance, and the Fair Labour Standards Act. Of fresh legislation there was very little. Had the New Deal been dealt already?

The answer was a clear 'no'. The President did have quite a number of new proposals on hand. But, for the better part of 1937, his attention was taken up by the controversy over his Judicial Reorganization Bill. By the time this settled down, his attention was increasingly being diverted to the gathering storm in Europe. And, anyway, Congress was no longer in an accommodating mood; it was even truculent. Leaders of Congress indicated to the President unmistakably that they were not prepared to accept any further far-reaching legislation.

The reason for this sudden defiance was not far to seek. Roosevelt was in the midst of his second term of office. The convention was there that a President could not seek a third term, and Roosevelt was, therefore, not likely to be in the White House for longer than a year and a half. Conservative Congressional leaders started employing delaying tactics even towards the meagre legislation put forward.

The President sensed the mood of Congress and refrained from sending down any further major proposals. He employed his usual skill only in the matter of his Fair Labour Standards measure; and, despite the concerted opposition, got it through Congress, more or less in the form in which he had sent it.

This was to be the last major New Deal legislation that Congress passed.

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In mid-1938, however, Roosevelt made an effort indirectly to overcome the stalemate in Congress over the New Deal. The party primary elections were then on in the country. He decided to launch a campaign in behalf of such candidates as were liberal-minded and well-disposed towards the New Deal.

During the previous six years, Roosevelt had kept himself steadfastly aloof from the primaries. He had maintained that this was purely a party affair, in which the President should properly not interfere. This long-standing policy was now given up for active intervention in favour of New Deal Democrats. He took time off from his duties to proceed on a nation-wide tour to be able to do so. This provoked a great furore in the press and among the public. Some went to the extent of describing the President's action as a "purge" of those not in agreement with his politics. The President's answer was simple and direct : the party primaries would determine to a large extent the make-up of the next Congress and that, in turn, would determine whether or not he could keep faith by his promises to the people. Also, he referred bluntly to the hidden opposition to the New Deal : after giving the programme lip service in 1936, it had turned around and knifed it in Congress in the months that followed. It was his duty, he said, publicly to repudiate those who had betrayed the New Deal in the past and would again do so in the future.

Roosevelt's campaign failed except in the case of his

home-State, New York. Conservative Democrats were too deeply entrenched elsewhere to lose.

The President's intention had been to influence the elections to Congress that were to be held towards the end of the year, so that he could get a substantial majority behind his programme. He was to be disappointed in that, too. The elections brought about a sharp reduction of liberals in the Congress. The possibility also arose of conservative Democrats and Republicans joining in league against the President's programmes. Chances of an active extension of the New Deal were thus even less slim than they had been in the previous Congress. In any event, with foreign affairs pressing for attention, it was doubtful if the President would have been free to pursue his social legislation programme even if he had ample backing in Congress. Also, with the nation more or less recovered from the crisis of the early '30s, the programme itself had lost its urgency.

For more reasons than one, the creative phase of the New Deal thus came to a close by the end of 1938.

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What were the concrete achievements of the New Deal during the years it had been in operation ?

Roosevelt himself listed these in a speech he delivered some time in 1940.

More than 42 million workers had been enrolled under the old-age pension system. 29 million workers had been brought under the protection of unemployment insurance. Some two million men and women of over 65 years of age were being paid cash grants each month. In other words the edifice of social security under the aegis of the state was already firmly established.

In the field of labour, collective bargaining had been guaranteed ; a minimum wage had been established ; a maximum work-week of 40 hours had been fixed with provision for time and a half for over-time ; and child labour had been outlawed. There had been a concrete rise in earnings as well. In the boom year of 1929, the average hourly earnings of factory workers had been 56 cents ; in early 1933, when Roosevelt took over as President, earnings had dropped to 45 cents ; by 1939-40, they had gone up to 67 cents an hour. Factory employees' salaries which had fallen to five billion dollars a year by 1932 had risen to ten billion dollars. Side by side with increase in earnings, the cost of living had been brought down. It had registered a fall of 22 per cent since 1929.

American business had similarly thrived. It was now on a sounder footing than it had ever been, even during the boom period of the '20s. Corporation profits had soared. In 1932, they had shown an overall loss of four million dollars. Some seven years later they were reporting profits of around four billion dollars a year.

More tangibly, Roosevelt proudly claimed, the American people were now building more homes, buying more pairs of shoes, more washing machines, more electric refrigerators, more electric current, and more textile products—than at any time during the boom. On the household dining tables there was more butter, more cheese, more meat, more canned goods—more food in general—than in the luxurious year of 1929.

From the early days of his political career, Roosevelt had kept before himself one major objective : "to make life better for the average man, woman and child." He had kept faith by that objective.

CHAPTER XI

FIGHTING ISOLATION

Isolationism is, has always been and always will be, a perfectly authentic expression of one phase of the American national spirit, says John Gunther. In the first years of Roosevelt in the Presidency, especially, this was an entrenched attitude among most thinking Americans. There were a variety of reasons for this attitude—most of them understandable. For one thing, an acute, and natural, dislike of entanglement in the perpetual bickerings that marked European relations at that time. The secret deals and the horse-trading that followed the First World War had also left the broad American public deeply disillusioned. The unashamed repudiation of war debts had similarly left a bitter taste. Over and above these was a distaste for war itself. The masses thought, not incorrectly, that war benefited only the merchants in war material.

From early 1936, however, such isolationist attitude ceased to have validity. In truth, as the President kept repeating, it was a most unwise, even harmful, attitude, against the background of the gathering storm in Europe.

Late next year, the President made a carefully thought out speech on foreign affairs. His aim : to drive home to the people that isolationism, if continued to be adhered to, would be disastrous, for America as well as for others.

He had been wanting to launch this attack even earlier, when, with the European situation steadily

deteriorating he had found his hands tied by the Neutrality Act. The Act forbade the despatch of war materials to all belligerents—aggressors and victims alike, while he wished to have the ban apply only to the aggressors. But before he could make the slightest moves in this direction, he had to bring about a drastic change in public thinking, and thereby in the attitude of Congressional leaders towards foreign affairs. Roosevelt would surely have approached the nation in this matter right after his election but for the "Court fight". It was thus not until late 1937 that Roosevelt could make an approach. Characteristically, he selected Chicago, in the heart of a rigidly isolationist area, for making his speech.

The President opened his speech by saying sternly that the people of the United States must, for the sake of their own future, give thought to the rest of the world; to the political situation in the world which had been progressively growing worse, and was such "as to cause grave concern and anxiety to all the peoples and nations who wished to live in peace and amity with their neighbours". Mentioning Europe specifically, he spoke of the haunting fear of calamity which held the peoples of that continent in their grip. Innocent peoples, innocent nations were being cruelly sacrificed to a greed for power and supremacy which was devoid of all sense of justice and humane consideration. "If those things came to pass in other parts of the world, let nobody imagine that America would escape, that America might expect mercy, that their Western hemisphere would not be attacked and that it would continue tranquilly and peacefully to carry on the ethics and arts of civilization". In other words,

the American way of life and the nation's political independence would themselves be in danger if something was not done. Then he said : "There is a solidarity and an interdependence about the modern world, both technically and morally which makes it impossible for any nation completely to isolate itself from political and economic upheavals in the rest of the world, especially when such upheavals appear to be spreading and not declining. International anarchy destroys every foundation for peace. It jeopardizes, either the immediate or future security of every nation, large or small".

He suggested, as a possible solution, that the nation work together with the rest of the world in what he described as "quarantining" the aggressors. When an epidemic broke out, the community acted together to quarantine the patients in order to protect the health of the rest. The lawlessness and anarchy that were plaguing the European continent as well as the Far East were no less epidemics although of a different character. And the men of aggressive intent should be quarantined, to prevent the epidemic from spreading.

Roosevelt had at last launched his attack on isolationism.

The speech was no more than a cautious feeler to assess the strength of isolationist thinking in the nation. And it had just the effect hoped for by the President. A volley of protests broke forth from the isolationists. An energetic public discussion followed and with it a growing awareness of the ugly situation developing in Europe and elsewhere. The ground was prepared for the active measures the President had in mind.

Roosevelt's Chicago speech was a landmark : it marked

the initiation of a shift in American opinion away from the selfish isolationism that the country had pursued for nearly two decades to an active internationalism.

The President made no further public speeches on this matter during the following months. Instead, he went quietly to work on the powerful legislative leaders on Capitol Hill, to bring about a shift in their thinking. Roosevelt also kept up his appeals to Heads of States to settle their problems peacefully and not rashly bring about a war.

Hitler, for one, paid little heed to these appeals. He continued to proceed on his headlong course. In 1936, he had occupied Rhineland, which had been placed by the Versailles Treaty under Anglo-French control. The Fuehrer's excuse was the doctrine of racial unity. He occupied Austria in March under the same pretext. In the months that followed, he prepared similarly to take over the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, on the ostensible ground of racial integration. The region had a minority of Germans. Hitler first issued a demand for the cession of the area to Germany and followed it up soon after with a mobilization of the German Army to invade Czechoslovakia. His superior craftiness and diplomatic skill had the effect of compelling the British and the French increasingly, though perhaps unwillingly, into a policy of appeasement of the dictator. In Munich, in September 1938 a pact was drawn up and signed by Britain, France, Italy and Germany whereby Czechoslovakia was forced to cede the Sudetenland to Germany. Not long afterwards, in March 1939 to be precise, Hitler took over what was left of Czechoslovakia, declaring that the disorder in that country constituted a threat t

Germany ! The large arms factories of that country now came into his possession and were to greatly aid and expedite his adventures.

Roosevelt had been watching with no little disquiet the growing appeasement of the dictator by Britain and France. Such a policy seemed calculated only to encourage aggression instead of putting an end to it. With Czechoslovakia taken, Hitler was already laying claims to Polish territory. From this side of the Atlantic, the President had a clear appreciation of the maniac that Hitler was and the menace he represented not to Europe alone but to the entire world. Roosevelt was never fooled by Hitler's bluster.

The President was watching with concern developments elsewhere too. The Fascist dictator in Italy, Signor Mussolini, had by now annexed a helpless Abyssinia, which had remained the last piece of independent territory in Africa. Mussolini was now casting covetous eyes on his neighbours in the east. In Spain, torn by strife since 1933, General Francisco Franco and his army group had by the end of 1936 gained effective control of most of the country—with the active assistance of Germany and Italy. During the three years that followed there raged a bitter war in central Spain where the valiant forces of the Popular Front Government, supported by an International Volunteers' Brigade, refused to yield. The unequal battle ended in 1939 in victory to Franco's forces. On the farther side of the globe, the Japanese seemed actively bent on emulating the European aggressors. The chain of aggressions they had started early in 1931 was extending alarmingly. 1935 saw a

tentative attack on Northern China. Two years later this had developed into a total war.

The refusal of the American nation to involve itself in all these in even the slightest measure apparently added to the boldness of the aggressors. It clearly strengthened their scorn for the democracies. Indeed, Hitler and Mussolini poked fun at the mediation efforts of the American President. Japan even got away with an attack on an American patrol ship on the Yangtse.

President Roosevelt came in for some criticism later for his seeming inaction during that crucial year 1938. It was said, for instance, that the European catastrophe of the following year might have been averted if the President had acted boldly then ; that at least the free Government in Spain could have been saved.

The charge was hardly fair.

Roosevelt was all the while acutely conscious of the threat the worsening European situation held for the world as a whole and of the need for active intervention on America's part. And he did have a clear idea as to what was to be done. But his hands were tied. There was first and foremost the deep antipathy to war among the people as among the law-makers. He had first to grapple with that attitude and change it. He could take no action which had not the sanction of the entire nation.

It was to the task of changing the nation's attitude and getting its sanction for the plans he had that Roosevelt's attention was directed during the long months of late 1938 and early 1939.

In January 1939, the President spoke urgently to Congress on international affairs. The Munich Pact, he said, had more or less averted a war, but it had become

increasingly clear that world peace was by no means assured. "All about us rage undeclared wars—military and economic. All about us are threats of new aggression—military and economic." Then, bluntly, the President said, "We have learnt that when we try to legislate neutrality, our neutrality laws may operate unevenly and unfairly. We may actually give aid to an aggressor and deny it to the victim." The President's objective was clear : The Neutrality Act had to be repealed.

Following his address to Congress, he set in motion a series of efforts towards this end. At least initially, the President met with outright defeat. The House of Representatives passed a new Neutrality Bill, but one which retained with no alteration the embargo on arms.

If, ultimately, the Neutrality Act came to be repealed, it was because of the force of events abroad. In the autumn of that year, Russia and Germany signed a pact of friendship. Hitler was ensuring by means of this pact that there would be no obstruction from the Russian side to the assault he had planned on Poland. His attack followed exactly a week after the signing of the pact. When Czechoslovakia was taken by Hitler, under what he described as his 'protection', contrary to the assurances he had given earlier, the British Prime Minister had been deeply incensed. There was already then talk of a possible attack on Poland by the German dictator if his claims over parts of that country, especially over the free city of Danzig, were not met. Chamberlain had then announced firmly that Britain would allow no attack on Poland. Now, in September, Chamberlain made good his word : He issued an ultimatum to Hitler to withdraw his troops from Polish territory. The latter's answer was a

scornful silence. His troops marched steadily on. On September 3, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany.

By mid-September, Western Poland was completely overrun by Nazi troops. Russia now invaded the helpless country from the east. By the end of the month, all resistance had been crushed and the country divided between Germany and Russia.

Roosevelt's reaction to the outbreak of general war in Europe was swift. In a fireside chat he warned the nation—and, indirectly, the Axis Powers—that America could not continue to remain neutral in thought. The President followed this up with the declaration of a limited national emergency. And a special session of the Congress was called to amend the Neutrality Act. With brutal candour, Roosevelt told Congress: "I regret that Congress passed that Act, I regret equally that I signed that Act." For, the Act had indeed helped the aggressors on the Continent, though indirectly. Towards the end of October, the Act was repealed by the Senate. A few days later, the House followed suit. The arms embargo was substituted by a cash-and-carry arrangement that would enable Britain and France to purchase munitions in America.

The new Act was, however, not immediately successful in checking the spreading blackout on the Continent. In the months that followed, the lights in Europe went out one by one.

Russia swept down on Finland early in 1940. The Finnish struggle lasted a brief three months. Then it was over. In April that year Nazi troops marched into Denmark and Norway. Denmark was captured in a

matter of hours. On the third day of the invasion Norway fell. The small British forces stationed in that country to assist in its defence could do little of any avail. A month later the German Army struck at Belgium and Holland. Almost simultaneously, five German armoured divisions broke through France's defences and marched towards the channel ports and Paris. The Allies were again dazed. A considerable number of British and French troops, rushed earlier to Belgium, were cut off completely now. The rest of the troops in France were encircled in a swift, skilful pincer movement by advancing German columns. As city after city fell, the struggle was seen to be hopeless. And as many allied troops as could be saved were evacuated to Britain from Dunkirk in a heart-breaking operation.

Winston Churchill, who had a few days earlier replaced Neville Chamberlain, as Prime Minister of Britain, pleaded frantically with President Roosevelt for immediate and substantial arms assistance. He feared that Britain might also be attacked by Germany. Disaster had piled upon disaster in Europe. America would have to face a Nazified Europe, he said, if it did not rush assistance to the democracies in time. The Prime Minister asked specifically for some fifty old destroyers, some hundred new aircraft and anti-aircraft equipment.

The President despatched to Britain as much of munitions as he could, but he could send no destroyers. For this, he had to secure the express permission of Congress. And that body was still vacillating. Stunned by the course of events in Europe, the country was more or less behind Roosevelt's plea for all out assistance to the Allies, short of America's own involvement in war. But Congress was

apparently waiting for the situation to harden further. It had not to wait long. On June 10, 1940, Mussolini, eager for the spoils of war, invaded the south of France. That country already lay broken. Mussolini's stab in its back crushed it completely. Paris fell four days later : on June 14. Reynaud resigned as Prime Minister and Marshal Petain who had led the group demanding an armistice with Germany assumed Prime Ministership. On June 21, an armistice was signed in the presence of the cackling German dictator. It was all over within very few days.

The fall of France shocked the entire American nation, and Congress as well, into rallying behind the President in his plans for active assistance to the European democracies and for energetic defence measures at home.

Before these could be implemented, however, preparations for another election took over the national stage, leaving little time for other matters.

CHAPTER XII

A THIRD TERM

Almost since 1937, one question had been exercising the minds of most Democratic politicians in the country. This was if Roosevelt would run for a third term. To run for a third term meant breaking the tradition that no President should remain in office for more than eight years. But this was no more than a tradition, with no legal sanction whatsoever. Congress had passed resolutions twice against the third term, the second being as recently as 1928, the objective being the prevention of even the semblance of dictatorship in the country. But neither of these had the sanction of written law.

Even in 1937, it was clear to supporters of Roosevelt's New Deal, that he would of necessity have to run for a third term, if only to consolidate and complete the programme he had started. The outbreak of the European war and the growing need for effective leadership of the democracies only strengthened their feeling that Roosevelt must run for a third term. The President himself seemed concerned about the future of the New Deal. Midway through his second term, he took an opportunity to declare firmly that he would not support the nomination of any Democrat not committed to the programme. The country would be in a sad state, he said, if it had to choose in 1940 "between a Democratic Tweedledee and a Republican Tweedledum". Again, a year later, he expressed similar anxiety in a letter to

the Governor of Illinois, who like many other Democratic leaders was urging the President to run for a third term. All liberal Democrats, the President said in the letter, were convinced "that if our Government in Washington and in a majority of the States should revert to the control of those who frankly put property ahead of human beings instead of working for human beings under a system of government which recognizes property, the nation as a whole would be again in a bad situation." The President would go only this far. He would not yet commit himself to a categorical stand whether or not he would run for a third term.

It was clear, however, that Roosevelt did wish to retire from the Presidency and devote himself to his farm in Hyde Park. For one thing, he was physically exhausted. But, as events moved fast in Europe and elsewhere, and isolationist preferences remained unchanged at home, the President realized the logic behind the demand of his friends that he remained in office to complete the work he had started. Yet he continued to be in two minds, while a controversy raged in the nation over the question. Men like Alfred Landon were going about saying that violation of the "sacred" tradition against the perpetuation in office of the chief executive would be fatal to the future of the republic. It would be un-American, he said. Admirers of the President refuted this argument with vigour. These maintained that the man in the White House was after all subject to the checks and controls of the Congress as well as of public opinion. Indeed it was for this reason that a specific ban on the third term had not been written into the Constitution. Their clinching argument was that if the

people wanted President Roosevelt for another four years, they were well within their rights in taking him. In that summer of 1940, when darkness was fast enveloping Europe and the Far East and the nation itself was faced with an emergency, the people, it seemed, clearly wanted Roosevelt to continue in office.

The Democrats met at Chicago to nominate their candidate, completely uncertain as to the President's own intentions. Roosevelt made one concession, though. In a message sent through his friend, Senator Barkley, he said, somewhat ambiguously, that he wished to make it clear that the delegates to the Convention were free to vote for any candidate. The delegates interpreted the message in the only possible way : Roosevelt was willing. Almost to a man, they rose and clamoured that he alone be chosen. The next day in the first ballot itself he was nominated. Roosevelt, as someone remarked, could no more be stopped from securing the nomination than the Niagara could be stopped.

In his speech of acceptance, delivered personally again, Roosevelt said he found himself "as almost everyone does sooner or later in his life-time, in a conflict between deep personal desire for retirement on the one hand and that great invisible thing called conscience on the other..." He added : "Like most men of my age I had made plans for myself, plans for a private life of my own choice and for my own satisfaction.... These plans, like so many other plans, had been made in a world which now seems as distant as any other planet. Today, all private plans of private life have been in a sense repealed by an overriding public danger."

There could surely have been no doubt about the

outcome of the elections that year. But there were still some who wondered if the personality of Wendell Wilkie, the Republican nominee, would not make a greater impression on the electorate than Roosevelt. Wilkie was a lovable man. He had till lately been a Democrat and broadly supported the New Deal. Thus, for the first time, Roosevelt was being opposed by a man who seemed more or less a perfect match for him.

The President's charm, however, as well as his hold over the masses, proved patently superior to Wilkie's personality. Poet Carl Sandburg was but reflecting the mood of the nation when, in a speech on election-eve, he called Roosevelt "a not perfect man and yet more precious than fine gold." Roosevelt won by a majority of over five and a half million votes ; of electoral votes, he secured 449 to Wilkie's 82.

It was, once again, a largely personal victory.

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As preparations started at home for the national elections, in Europe, Hitler was preparing feverishly to invade Britain. He had set the invasion date for mid-August. His strategy : first to break Britain's naval defences ; then to launch a thoroughgoing air attack with his dreaded Luftwaffe ; and finally to send his army across the English Channel. Following this plan, the German navy had sunk or disabled a dozen valuable British destroyers by the end of July. A harried Churchill turned once again to Roosevelt with a frantic appeal for some fifty old reconditioned destroyers. American assistance, he pleaded, was urgently required.

Roosevelt himself was not unconscious of the urgency of such assistance. But without specific legislation by

Congress he could not send the destroyers. To secure such legislation would undoubtedly take long. All that the President could do was to keep the urgency of the situation alive before the people. Simultaneously, he tried out various possibilities for somehow pushing such assistance through ; but to no avail.

Meanwhile, 'Hitler had launched the second phase of his invasion of Britain. The entire air power of the Nazis was now deployed in a most inhuman attack on that country. The attack started on August 8, with 200 fighter planes. By the end of the week, their strength had increased to 1,800. The Nazi design was to break Britain in one swift stroke.

In the face of these developments, Roosevelt hit upon an ingenious arrangement. He quickly sent to Britain fifty old destroyers—in return, as he informed the nation, for the lease of British bases to America. He did so without going to Congress for its consent. This was a courageous decision in some ways. Politically, however, it was a grave error. The elections were just two months away and the deal could have been used as a handle by his opponents to influence its outcome. Roosevelt, though, hardly gave thought to such considerations. He had made up his mind to assist Britain in her struggle against the Nazi hordes : a struggle in which, as he realized too well, the very future of the free world was at stake.

One result of the deal was that American neutrality was now definitely ended. The deal marked the first step in a growing alliance of the free world against the tyrannies in Europe and the Far East. Naturally, it came as a shock to the two European dictators. They promptly

entered into a tripartite pact with the militarists in Japan, in a stratagem designed to divert American attention away from the European front to the Pacific.

The destroyer deal was not the only political risk Roosevelt took in that crucial autumn of 1940. He proposed to Congress about the same time a Conscription Bill to draft all able-bodied men, between the ages of 21 and 36, into the defence of the country. The bill was passed and Roosevelt himself initiated what was the first peace-time draft in American history. Simultaneously, the Navy was put into fighting shape. Besides, a vast programme of armaments production was set in motion. Aircraft factories and steel mills soon began to hum with unprecedented activity. The nation was steadily, if a little silently, being geared for a great war effort.

As Roosevelt told a press-man towards the end of that year, he had changed from Dr. New Deal to Dr. Win-the-war.

CHAPTER XIII

ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY

Roosevelt's task, on his re-election to a third term was clear : to help win the war. He had long ago resolved on this. The overwhelming popular vote he received strengthened further that resolve. Roosevelt interpreted the vote as a clear mandate for him to proceed on the course he had charted out. Preparations for active assistance to Britain and other allied nations had been well afoot by mid-1940 itself, although none too overtly. The President now openly reinforced those first efforts.

On this question of assistance, an ingenious idea was developing meanwhile in his mind. A month after the elections he presented it, gingerly, at a press conference. He told pressmen that in the world situation then existing, perhaps the best immediate defence of the United States was the success of Great Britain in defending itself. The latter had, therefore, to be assisted in every way. For one thing, the United States could accept British orders for armaments ; these happened to be essentially the same kind that American forces themselves used. Then, cautiously, he added : America could either lease or lend these materials. There would be no question of dollars involved, since it would be a purely lend-lease operation. He explained : "Suppose my neighbour's home catches fire and I have a length of garden hose, four or five hundred feet away..." The

pressmen quickly caught his idea : going to the assistance of Britain in the crisis that faced her was no more than a neighbourly act of assistance.

Roosevelt's homely analogy had prepared the ground—at least among the nation's press—for increased assistance to the Allies without any unseemly bargaining over prices and terms.

Some three days after he had put out his feeler, the President elaborated it in a fireside chat to the nation over the radio. He said : "I make the direct statement to the American people that there is far less chance of the United States getting into war if we do all we can now to support the nations defending themselves against attack by the Axis, than if we acquiesce in their defeat". Therefore, he demanded, "we must have more ships, more guns and more planes—more everything. This can only be accomplished if we discard the notion of 'business as usual' ". Then he added : "We must be the great arsenal of democracy."

Step by gradual step thus, he prepared the country for what was clearly an unorthodox proposal, the lend-lease of arms to the Allies ; a proposal, so far as he was concerned, that neatly circumvented the bothersome procedure of getting the assent of Congress for each bit of armament he shipped. All he had to do was to get an initial, and blanket, approval.

Roosevelt sent his lend-lease proposal to Congress in January. Some three months later, the bill was accepted and passed. Shipments of armaments started almost immediately. With production of arms and ammunition rising phenomenally, the country became truly the arsenal of democracy by mid-1941. The Axis were now doomed.

If the earlier destroyer deal marked the end of isolationism, lease-lend marked a total and far-reaching reversal of that state of mind. The effect of this Act, it has been said, was to change American foreign policy more than anything else since the first American President, George Washington.

In June that year, Hitler attacked Russia. President Roosevelt promptly arranged for munitions supplies to Russia also under the Lease-lend Act to help her fight back effectively. However anxious, he could do no more to help the Allies. In those uncertain months of early 1941, a cautious policy of assistance short of war was the only one President Roosevelt could follow.

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During those months, the President was also occupied with questions regarding the future. For in his own mind he was sure of the early defeat of the aggressors. Thought had therefore to be given to the shape of things in the world after they were defeated. In his State of the Union message to Congress in January he outlined the post-war world of his dreams.

It would be a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. He said: "The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understanding which will secure to every nation a healthy peace-time life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough

fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour—anywhere in the world.” This was, Roosevelt said, no vision of a distant millennium. It was a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation.

Late in July, pursuing his dream of a truly free world the President met with Prime Minister Churchill on board a ship off the Newfoundland coast. The two leaders discussed current problems and at the instance of the President, questions of the future as well.

A joint declaration was issued at the end of the talks, enunciating the common principles in the policies of their respective countries on which they based their hopes for a better future for the world. The two declared that after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny they hoped to see established a peace which would afford to all nations “means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries and which would afford assurance that all men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.”

The Atlantic Charter, as this solemn declaration quickly came to be known, was another step towards the translation of the President’s dream of a global new deal into reality.

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As has been seen, the early months of 1941 were, in one way, months of agonized suspense for Roosevelt. The President found it increasingly necessary to enter the war and actively fight the Nazi aggressors. Yet he was tied down to a no-war policy. The Axis nations themselves were carefully avoiding any overt provocation

that would bring America into the war. This state of suspense was, however, not to continue for long. The Japanese, who had been itching for an attack on American possessions in the Far East were steadily getting ready for the strike. Few could guess it, though. The Japanese had covered up their preparations rather well. Even as they were poised for the attack, their envoy in Washington was engaged in parleys with the State Department on a settlement in the Far East.

Roosevelt himself had never been deceived by this. He knew well that the Japanese militarists were in firm control of that country's cabinet; a clash between them and America was inevitable sooner or later. Japanese troops had already moved into Indo-China. Yet, clearly, even the President was not prepared for the sudden venomous blow that the Japanese forces struck at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. News of the attack was broken to the President while he was going over his stamp collections at leisure. Within an hour the President had decided an all-out war against the Japanese.

An urgent war message was despatched to Congress the next day. The President said: "Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan. The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific." The President listed other attacks launched by Japan the same day: on Malaya, on Hongkong, on Guam and on the Philippines.

Japan had, he said, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. He asked Congress to declare a state of war between the United States and that country. Within half an hour of the delivery of the message both Houses of Congress had passed a joint resolution declaring war with Japan. Three days later, similar resolutions were passed declaring war against Germany and Italy as well, after the two had declared war on America under the terms of the Axis Pact.

The suspense and uncertainty, the vacillation and inhibition of the previous months were now ended. The President gave brisk orders for a stepping up of the already massive armaments programme. American troops were rushed to the different war fronts and a vigorous counter-offensive was launched within a very short time. Simultaneously planes and tanks and other armaments being turned out in astronomical numbers were despatched without delay to the Allies.

Yet that year was not a successful one for the Allies. In the Far East the Japanese struck down country after country and finally reached the threshold to India. On the north European front, the Russians had suffered severe reverses. In Africa, British forces were steadily retreating. However, with the enormous resources of America now thrown into the fight, the ultimate outcome of the war itself was never in doubt.

During those months, Roosevelt devoted himself mainly to supervising the efficient deployment of the nation's resources to bring about a quick end to the war and, on another side, striving to ensure that the war boom did not result in an unhealthy inflation in the domestic economy. This was a strenuous task but,

as always in an emergency, Roosevelt showed amazing leadership.

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So confident indeed was the President of the ultimate outcome, that once the tide of war began to turn, he started actively pursuing his plans for the post-war world. On the first day of January 1942, representatives of twenty-six nations met at the White House and signed a joint declaration, pledging their cooperation for victory and subscribing wholeheartedly to the common programme of purposes and principles outlined in the Atlantic Charter of August the previous year. The declaration was issued largely at the instance of President Roosevelt. This declaration was the seed that would sprout later into the United Nations Organization.

1943 witnessed a complete reversal of the course of the war. In the early months, German forces were pushed out of North Africa. By late summer Allied forces had pushed on to Italy. In September, Italy surrendered. Early in the same year, the Russians had beaten back the German hordes. The President and Churchill had, in the previous year, taken a decision to concentrate their fire first towards winning the European war, and thereafter to turn their attention to the Far East. The progress of Allied forces on the Far East front could not therefore be as speedy as elsewhere. The Japanese were being pushed back steadily, but they were not yet vanquished. It was clear, though, towards the end of 1943 that victory over the Axis could not be far off.

During the months of waiting for the war to end, Roosevelt went ahead energetically with his plans for a healthy reorganization of the world. In a series of international

conferences he met with other leaders of the world and discussed, besides the question of winning the war, the shaping of the post-war world. Roosevelt kept bargaining at all these meetings, for a truly brave new world. Again and again, he declared that unless the peace that followed recognized the whole world as one neighbourhood and did justice to the whole human race, the germs of another world war would remain as a continuing threat to mankind. Pursuing this same objective the President met the Russian leader Marshal Stalin at the Persian Capital, Teheran, towards the end of 1943. This was the first meeting between the two. Roosevelt's aim was to establish a workable and mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and Russia during war time as well as during the peace that would follow.

The chief decision of the Teheran Conference concerned the opening of a second front in Europe which Russia had been pressing for urgently. A decision to launch an invasion of occupied France had been taken in April, 1942 itself, but the invasion had to be postponed again and again for strategic reasons. The date of invasion was now finally settled upon.

Allied landings on the Normandy coast in June were the chief military event of 1944. In an outstandingly successful action, Allied Armies under the command of General Dwight Eisenhower fought and steadily pushed back the German troops day after day. Victory, at least in Europe, was well within sight.

CHAPTER XIV

ONE LAST ELECTION

Whatever happened within the country or without, the American public has to go to the polls once every four years to elect a President of its choice to run administration of the country : a seemingly immutable arrangement adhered to down the years. In 1944, with so much going on in the nation itself as in the world, the election to the Presidency had again to be held.

There had been some doubt, even questioning, four years earlier over the propriety of Roosevelt contesting the elections. In 1944, there was little doubt, little questioning. As the Commander-in-Chief, and as the leader of the free world's war effort, he had successfully conducted the war so far. Victory was in sight now. There was no doubt that he had to continue. As for the Democratic Party, Roosevelt continued to be its supreme vote-getter of all time. When the party met to nominate its candidate, it chose Roosevelt overwhelmingly, once again.

Roosevelt had no choice but to accept the party nomination. "All that is within me cries out to go back to my home on the Hudson River," he said in a message to the party convention, "to avoid public responsibilities and to avoid also the publicity which in our democracy follows every step of the nation's chief executive." But, if ordered by the people to run for election again, he had to obey. The American public was indeed so ordering him.

The masses were yet completely under Roosevelt's spell. Despite bitter campaign, he was re-elected by a margin of nearly four million popular votes.

But he was a tired man by now, mortally tired. Twelve years of hard work in the White House during an intensely crisis-ridden era had taken their toll. Intimates noticed that the President was not half as gay or debonair as he had once been. He was growingly listless and easily tired. When he said that his entire being longed to go back to his home on the Hudson River, he had expressed no more than the truth.

There was, despite it all, a deep compulsion within him to see the war through to its end ; even more important, see through to fruition the efforts he had initiated for establishing the United Nations Organization, an organization which would be an effective safeguard against the recurrence of wars in the world and for preserving peace. It was primarily for this purpose that the President proceeded to Yalta in the heart of Crimea in Russia to meet with Stalin and Churchill in a final conference to settle outstanding issues regarding the war and the post-war world. This was to be the last and, in many ways, the most crucial international conference the President attended. The aim of the conference was three-fold—to consolidate final plans for beating Germany, to settle the question of Russia's entering the war against Japan in the Far East and to finalize all details in regard to the peace that would follow, including the organization of the United Nations Conference at San Francisco.

Stalin was a hard bargainer. The President had to make many concessions to him before he could ensure the Russian leader's co-operation in the plans for the post-war

world. Roosevelt said once that he had always negotiated with Stalin with his fingers crossed. There was to be much controversy later over the concessions made by the President. Roosevelt, though, was confident in his mind that he could ensure that the concessions were not misused by the Russians. This was, however, not to be. Even on the cruise back home, Roosevelt's health started steadily falling.

When he addressed Congress on his return, on the results of the Yalta Conference, Roosevelt did so sitting down, which was unusual. What was more surprising was the President's overt public reference to his disability, perhaps for the first time in 20 years. "I know you will realize," he said, "that it makes it a lot easier for me not to have to carry about ten pounds of steel around on the bottom of my legs." Never before had Roosevelt asked for special consideration because of his crippled legs. Observers noticed certain other things as well. For one thing, he spoke with an impediment in his voice. And the voice itself was weak. The fact was Roosevelt was mortally tired.

Some three weeks later, he left for Warm Springs for a spell of rest and recuperation, as also to work on two important speeches. One of these was for the Democratic Party's annual Jefferson Day Dinner; the other was his intended address for the opening of the San Francisco Conference.

Roosevelt was alone in his last days. All four sons were away in the war. Eleanor had stayed back in Washington. His daughter Anna, who had accompanied him to Yalta, had also stayed back.

For two weeks, the President rested and was, to all appearances, improving in health.

The war in Europe was fast coming to a close. Each passing day brought news of further Allied victories. In the Far East, Allied forces were fighting back with vigour against Japan. Reports spoke of the increasing certainty of the close of that war in a matter of weeks. On another side, preparations for the United Nations Conference in San Francisco were well advanced.

April 12 : Thursday. In the forenoon, before lunch, the President continued to work on his Jefferson Day address, made minor alterations and additions in the typescript. The previous day, he had added an additional sentence at the end of the draft : "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith." He went over the lines and over the entire script. Suddenly he clutched his head with both hands : there was a severe ache ; then fainted. A cerebral haemorrhage had occurred.

Some two hours later Roosevelt was dead.

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The news spread to the entire nation, to the entire world, in a matter of minutes. The man, who had seemed somehow invincible, was now dead. The captain of a generation, a well-beloved captain, had passed. Men and women wept unashamedly : the President had been like someone, a loved one, in their own family. A young soldier, standing outside the White House with many others in silent grief, turned to a friend and said, "I felt as if I knew him." He paused, then added : "I felt as if he knew me—and I felt as if he liked me." The young man had summed up the feelings of the nation and, in some measure, of the world.

CHAPTER XV

ENDURING WORK : A POSTSCRIPT

Looking back at President Roosevelt's work some sixteen years of his passing away, one finds that whatever he did in the domestic and international spheres has by and large endured, that it has indeed been extended further still and diversified. And the basic aims of his New Deal have been absorbed into and become part of the fabric of America's life. In a sense, Roosevelt's visionary ideas have only lately attained to their fullest flower.

Consider his domestic policies. In the field of farming, his two-fold policy of controlled output and price support is recognized as the only way to ensure fair returns to the farmer ; and is continued practically unchanged. If the farmer has now come into his own and become a power to reckon with, in the nation's economy as well as politically, he has to thank Roosevelt for it. In industry, similarly, the 'concrete co-operative movement' that Roosevelt brought about yet abides in a great measure. A certain self-regulation, in order to avoid over-production and competition, has become a permanent feature in industry. Labour, for whom Roosevelt was the first to secure the right of collective bargaining, has flourished and has today acquired massive economic and political power. Roosevelt's measures to bring about security and justice for the 'forgotten man' have likewise developed to a degree where the 'forgotten man' hardly exists. Again, his policy of supervision over and control

of the banking and credit system endures perhaps in even stricter manner. Yet another policy that has flowered further is Roosevelt's TVA, a striking example of regional planning through multi-purpose river projects.

In other words, President Roosevelt had expanded the role of the State dynamically and vested it with what Professor Dexter Perkins, in one of his studies on the New Deal, calls a positive conception of responsibility: "responsibility to relieve want and unemployment through the Federal agencies, responsibility for providing for the farmer a larger part of the national product, responsibility for the development of national resources on a more grandiose scale, responsibility for the maintenance of industrial peace, enlarged responsibility for the operation of the nation's credit system." This was a conception considered bold and unorthodox in Roosevelt's day. But not so any longer. Such positive responsibility is indeed taken for granted on the part of the modern State. This is a measure of the success of Roosevelt's work.

Roosevelt did not confine his conception of positive responsibility to internal affairs alone. He applied it to world affairs as well. In this field, his active work would seem to have yielded fruits far more striking, far more heartening than those in the domestic sphere. America's commitments today in the defence of the free world are a far cry from the rigid isolationism of Roosevelt's early years as President. The global New Deal he passionately strove and laid the foundation for—through, among other things, the Atlantic Charter—is fast becoming a concrete reality. The American nation's assistance in the translation of that dream increases day by day. Again, the United Nations Organization, for whose establishment

Roosevelt made perhaps the largest single contribution, has grown steadily and developed into a regulatory force in international affairs to some degree at least.

In this great international organization, in the increasing implementation the world over of the four basic freedoms, in the now universally accepted concept of the State's far reaching responsibility in social and economic affairs—in all these and in a variety of other things not so abstract, the TVA for instance, Roosevelt's noble work still lives. And so does the man himself.

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